University of Alberta

Selection and Evaluation of School Principals

by

David William Thomas ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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in

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Abstract

Research findings have shown a positive relationship between the effectiveness of principals and the effectiveness of their schools. Careful selection and evaluation of principals are two processes that school systems can use to ensure that schools have effective principals. This study investigated policies and practices used by school systems in Alberta to select principals and evaluate their performance. Particular attention was given to the extent to which current practices and criteria are consistent with recommendations in the literature. Several recommendations are presented based on the results, the literature, and personal reflection.

Nearly all of the superintendents in Alberta and a sample of recently appointed principals participated in the study. Three sources of data were used: (a) policy documents supplied by superintendents; (b) questionnaires completed by superintendents and principals to identify these practices and criteria used in the selection and evaluation of principals, levels of satisfaction with current policies and practices, and contextual variables which influence both processes; and (c) interviews with five superintendents and five principals to clarify issues raised in the documents and questionnaires.

Some of the general findings about selection and evaluation were that many school systems did not have well-developed policies, perceptions regarding criteria used varied markedly among and between groups, most respondents were generally satisfied with current practices, and contextual variables substantially influenced both processes.

The major findings related to selection were that a variety of

technologies are used, many superintendents had concerns about the talent pool, actual practices did not compare well with recommended practices, appropriate previous experience was rated highly by all sources, and few criteria were directly related to effective principal behaviors.

Concerning evaluation, several major findings were as follows: most systems used a combination of approaches, few respondents reported that remediation programs exist, current practices compared moderately well to recommended practices, "job-related skills and knowledge" was the criterion mentioned most frequently by superintendents and principals, and criteria used in Alberta generally addressed those behaviors associated in the literature with effective principals.

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Chapter 1

Overview of the Study

This study examined the selection and evaluation of school principals in Alberta. Four major factors contributed to its timeliness:
(a) the direct link between effective leadership and effective schools;
(b) the changing role of the principal resulting from changing societal expectations, as well as the introduction of site-based management, school councils, and responsibility for teacher evaluations;
(c) restructuring of education in Alberta resulting in fewer systems with less support from the central office; and (d) insufficient research on the topic. In view of the very substantial influence of restructuring of education in the province on the role of the principal, this chapter includes a brief summary of its history.

Background

Prior to August 1993, 182 school authorities existed in the Province of Alberta. The number of school jurisdictions had increased either through the exercise of Constitutional rights by religious minorities within system boundaries or by the separation of one or more units of a larger system to form another system. Only 141 of these 182 authorities operated schools. The other 41 taxed the eligible assessment base and paid tuition for resident students in a system of the board's choice. Many individuals believed that these 41 jurisdictions existed solely for the purpose of collecting revenue from high assessment areas. However, Peters and Richards (1995) have argued that "antiquated requirements of the Alberta Government" (p. 3) prevented some of these authorities from joining with similar systems (i.e., public or separate) to form more viable units. Government regulations required municipal school districts to have coterminous boundaries with the municipalities served. Therefore, small separate districts could not join with an adjoining district outside their municipal boundaries. A second regulation stipulated that jurisdictions had to be contiguous to be considered for amalgamation. However, sparse populations over much of rural Alberta contributed to many districts with low enrolments being widely separated from each other and thus not eligible for amalgamation.

Soon after the provincial election in 1993, the government made clear its intent to restructure education. Three primary factors espoused by government contributed to this action: fiscal equity, quality of education, and a large provincial debt and operating deficit.

In the mid-1980s, school authorities with low assessment bases began to petition the government to establish a revenue-sharing formula which would guarantee greater fiscal equity. During this time, per pupil expenditures in the province ranged from under $ 4,000 to more than $ 20,000. At the same time, mill rates for property tax varied from less than 2 mills to more than 17 mills. This disparity created an "uneven playing field" for jurisdictions attempting to provide equitable education experiences for students in the province.

As early as 1988, the Department of Education, under Minister of Education, the Honorable Nancy Betkowski, initiated discussion across the province in an attempt to reduce fiscal inequity. This action led to the formation of two special interest groups. A group of 43 school systems with low-assessment bases established the Equity for Students Committee. These school systems were in favor of pooling all education dollars and redistributing them on a per pupil basis. In response, a number of jurisdictions with high-assessment bases formed the Education Trust Equity Council (ETEC) which supported the concept of equity, but espoused a different means of achieving this goal. Members of ETEC wished to retain the right to local taxation, however, they offered to pool "excess" revenue collected from a fixed mill rate applied across the province. The additional revenue would then be distributed to those school systems with smaller assessment bases. Each group lobbied the government and other school authorities to support their particular solution to the problem.

Improvement in the quality of education was added as a government priority during the tenure of the Honorable Jim Dinning as Minister of Education. In 1991, Mr. Dinning commissioned the completion of a "Report Card" on public education in the province. The report card revealed that student achievement in the province did not compare favorably with student achievement internationally in mathematics and science. In addition, other programs such as native education were identified by public feedback as requiring significant improvement. Therefore, the Department of Education and school authorities across the province were required to demonstrate action towards the improvement in the quality of education through the development and implementation of "business plans."

The third major factor, and possibly the primary factor precipitating major restructuring in the province, was the state of the economy. A reduction in the price of oil on the world market resulted in a significant short-fall of provincial revenue beginning in 1985. However, despite the reduction in revenue the government continued to budget and spend as it had previously. Consequently, the reported accumulated debt exceeded $30 billion dollars by the end of 1992. The government of Premier Ralph Klein promised to eliminate operating deficits by 1997 with a further commitment to address the debt.

The environment created by the combination of the above factors provided the impetus for a significant restructuring of education. One facet of restructuring was a significant reduction in the number of school systems in the province. In August 1993, the Minister of Education, the Honorable Halvor Jonson, took the first step by announcing that non-operating school authorities would be amalgamated with existing operating school systems. While 35 of the 41 non-operating school authorities were joined with existing operating jurisdictions, the other six were not incorporated at that time. In some cases, these were not located geographically close enough to a system of similar faith (i.e., Catholic separate to Catholic separate). However, a statement of intent indicated that these systems would be incorporated into larger units when the overall restructuring of school systems was complete.

In January 1994, Premier Ralph Klein announced that the number of operating school jurisdictions would be reduced from 141 to approximately 60. Schools jurisdictions were given until August 31, 1994, to submit plans for voluntary union with another system or systems. If the units were not large enough or if systems were unable to come to agreeable arrangements, the Minister of Education had the authority to stipulate how many and which jurisdictions would be joined together to form a regional unit. By August 31, 1994, the number of school systems in the province had been reduced to 71. The minister proposed further amalgamation, and in October 1994 the number of school systems in the province had been reduced to 60: 41 public, 16 separate, and 3 Francophone systems.

Several Roman Catholic separate school systems initiated a court challenge regarding the constitutionality of the government's action. They were granted a temporary injunction and, as a result, the number of operating systems increased to 66. However, in early 1997 the court challenge was abandoned. All school systems involved in the court challenge were to be united with other systems by September of 1997.

This study was initiated in July 1996 when 66 school authorities were operating in Alberta.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe policies and practices used in the selection and evaluation of principals in Alberta and then to identify the degree to which these are consistent with criteria or recommendations in the literature based on research and learned opinion. Information from the study was expected to provide important new information on each process.

Justification for the Study

Several factors contributed to the importance and timeliness of this study. Schools and education have always been important to society. However, as the 21st century approaches with an increasing emphasis on globalization, international economic competition, and technological explosion, education has become even more important. As leader of the school, the principal is one of the key factors contributing to a successful school.

Historically the principal has been viewed as educational statesman, instructional leader, and custodian of societal values. A variety of expectations accompanied each of these aspects of the principal's role. As statesman, the primary responsibility of the principal has been to build and maintain support for the school and education in the community. The principal, as instructional leader, was expected to produce satisfactory outcomes by ensuring use of the most effective teaching strategies and materials. At the same time, the principal and the school served to acculturate the student population in the prevailing norms and values of society. More recently, a number of factors have served to increase the importance and complexity of the role of the principal: (a) the demonstrated link between principal behavior and school effectiveness, (b) restructuring of educational governance, (c) increased emphasis on accountability to the public for educational outcomes, (d) the changing nature of students served by the school, and (e) new conceptualizations of leadership.

Glasman and Heck (1992) and Musella and Lawton (1986) have observed that research on school effectiveness in the 1970s and early 1980s paid particular attention to those factors which appeared to have an impact on student learning. Subsequently, researchers directed considerable attention to principals' behaviors which were potentially relevant to school effectiveness. Early results inferred a causal relationship between principal behavior and school effectiveness. However. Glasman and Heck concluded that more recent research (e.g., Duke & Iwanicki, 1992; Hallinger & Murphy, 1987; Heck, 1992; Mayor & Heck, 1992; and Rowan & Denk, 1984) does not support a causal relationship although it strongly supports a link between principal behavior and school effectiveness. Heck and Marcoulides (1996) emphasized this conclusion when they stated, "We do, however, believe that much of what principals do has no particular bearing on the effectiveness of the school, while other activities are critical to its success" (p. 13).

In addition, research findings exist regarding the effectiveness of restructured schools in producing improved student learning. For example, Good and Brophy (1986) found that when schools had control over their budgets and had authority to hire staff there was a positive impact on student learning. Similarly, Louis and Miles (1991) found that a team approach was a critical factor contributing to success in larger urban high schools where extensive reform had produced significant increases in student achievement. Based on these findings and those of other research (e.g., Hannaway & Talbert, 1993) many schools have embarked on related ventures in restructuring.

Moreover, the primary focus of government in education has changed in many jurisdictions from equity of opportunity for students to accountability relating to outcomes. Under better economic conditions, school jurisdictions were encouraged to develop an increasing number of programs to meet a wide range of special needs. In fact, more attention was given to the existence of programs than to their effectiveness. However, Musella (1983) remarked that as available funds decreased, pressures were exerted to reevaluate the priorities of education. Musella further noted that an emphasis on outcomes is followed by a "demand for more efficient and effective schooling" (p.6). Morgan (1986) concluded that in the presence of uncertainty, organizations [government] typically focus on means of controlling outputs rather than controlling behavior. Subsequently, the demands for a better product from schools and for more effective schools create a direct focus on the quality of teaching and administrative staff.

In particular, the Alberta government's restructuring of services placed great emphasis on accountability. Three specific initiatives related to desired accountability have added to the complexity of the principal's role. The first was mandated school-based management (Alberta Education, 1995). As a result of this change, principals must assume responsibility for additional functions associated with the operation of schools which traditionally had been handled by central office staff.

The second initiative was the establishment of school councils.

Section 17 of the revised Alberta School Act (1994) mandates that each school must form a school council that shall

> (a) advise the principal and the board respecting any matter relating to the school,
> (b) perform any duty or function delegated to it by the board in accordance with the delegation,
> (c) ensure that students in the school have the opportunity to meet the standards of education set by the Minister,
> (d) ensure that the fiscal management of the school is in accordance with the requirements of the board and the superintendent, and
> (e) do anything it is required to do under the regulations. (p.23)

While principals have always attended to parent and community relations, formalization of this function presents new and increased challenges.

Finally, at a time when the role of the principal is expanding and increasing in complexity, less support is available from central office. Reduction of the number of school jurisdictions in Alberta from 141 to 66 and imposition by government of a 4% cap (6% for systems with fewer than 2000 students) on administrative expenditures forced a reduction in the number of central office staff available for assistance to schools.

Also, Pounder and Young (1996) observed that a number of trends in student characteristics have had significant impact on the role of the principal. They concluded that these trends are important because of "their relationship to student learning and achievement potential" and the impact they have on the instructional environment of the school (p. 281). Alberta Education policy supports the inclusion and integration of students with medical and educational disabilities into regular school programs. Because they have limited exposure to students with special needs, many teachers feel inadequate to deal with the added responsibility of providing care along with instruction. In addition, limited funding for education has exacerbated the problem by reducing the schools' capabilities of hiring sufficient support personnel.

Additionally, Pounder and Young (1996) noted that "more schools now serve children whose educational and economic family backgrounds limit school success, with substantial racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity among students, and with students who may be victims of divorce, poverty, and violence" (p. 281). Space does not permit a discussion of the specific implications of each circumstance on the school and its program.

Pounder and Young (1996) concluded that the net effect of these educational initiatives and changing expectations is to encourage the development of partnerships between schools, parents, community agencies, and businesses whenever possible to address the diverse needs of the student population. Such a focus challenges the traditional bureaucratic model of leadership which has prevailed for many years. Principals now face the challenge of shared decision-making, collaboration, and cooperation not only within the school but also in a broader community context.

The added complexity of the position, increased expectations for accountability, and the importance of the position for school effectiveness demand that those in the principalship are adequate to the task. However, while current literature explicates the basis for sound practices it also reveals that selection is frequently not done well.

Webb, Montello, and Norton (1994) remarked that one of the quickest ways to make an important improvement in services in education is through screening and selection of qualified principals. However, Musella (1983) identified these problems with the selection process: (a) lack of accepted criteria, (b) inadequate data-collection procedures, (c) lack of valid and reliable information, (d) lack of clarity of the role of selectors at the different stages in the selection process, (e) lack of appropriate involvement by those in the best position to know, and (f) use of criteria unrelated to the job. Morgan (1988) identified similar weaknesses in the process in Britain and added that personality and personal qualities were given much more weight in the decision than were job-related skills or prior performance. A review of existing literature relating to the selection of schools principals conducted by Schmidt and Schechtman (1990) reflected on the lack of empirical research regarding the effectiveness of various selection practices.

Once the principal has been selected, adequate performance assessments must be conducted to improve performance and provide information to facilitate administrative decisions (e.g., contract renewal). However, Ginsberg and Thompson (1992) observed that there is insufficient research on principal evaluation. Similarly, Glasman and Heck (1992) noted that despite the emphasis on evaluation in the United States, the quality of evaluation systems had not improved in the previous 15 years. Other researchers have noted specific concerns regarding the practice. For example, Luck and Manatt (1984) and Herriot and Firestone (1984) claimed that because contextual variables such as size and location of schools, the level of school, and the number and size of the publics being served should be acknowledged in the process of evaluation, no single format is sufficient to serve all situations.

Further, Duke and Iwanicki (1992) have affirmed that the "fit" of the principal to the context may be just as important as the skills and abilities possessed by that individual. However, some researchers (e.g., Leithwood and Montgomery, 1986; and Kelsey, 1990, 1992) have found that assessments are frequently conducted to comply with policy or statutory regulations with little attention given to the improvement of performance or the relevance of individual fit. Leithwood and Montgomery also noted that many assessments lacked detail, did little to clarify role responsibilities, required excessive conformity to one model of what it meant to be a good principal, did not ensure fairness, and did not provide adequate support for improvement.

Finally, the literature identified a lack of substantive research in the area of the selection and evaluation of principals. Baltzell and Dentler (1983) remarked that

> in recent years, the importance of the principal has increased as the role demands of this position have become ever more complex and the pressures on public education ever more intense. Yet, remarkably little is known just how these critical educational leaders are chosen. (p.1)

This comment prefaced a study prepared by Baltzell and Dentler for the National Institute of Education in the United States. More recently, Musella and Lawton (1986) stated a five-point rationale for studying principal selection procedures in Ontario, one of which was that "little is known about the current state of practice of selection procedures in Ontario" (p. 3). A recent search of the literature reveals that the situation has not substantially changed.

The literature on evaluation identifies a similar lack of research validating many of the practices used. For example, Ginsberg and Berry (1990) found five categories of studies: (a) home recipes which consisted of opinions regarding instruments and methods; (b) literature reviews; (c) guidelines and textbooks: (d) surveys on practice, and (e) research and evaluation studies which focussed on the investigations of particular instruments. In most cases they noted an absence of accompanying empirical research. Similarly, Ginsberg and Thompson (1992) concluded that "the state of research on principal evaluation emphasizes the lack of empirically supported information about best practices" (p. 67).

In view of the importance of the principal to school effectiveness, increasing complexity of the position, and the emphasis on public accountability, current procedures for selecting and evaluating principals must be reviewed. This need was met by investigating the questions listed below.

General Research Question

What policies and practices are used in the selection and evaluation of school principals in Alberta and to what extent are these policies and practices consistent with practices recommended in the literature?

Specific Research Questions

1. (a) What policies and practices relating to the selection of principals are currently used in Alberta?

(b) To what extent do contextual variables (e.g., size and location of school systems) influence policies and practices used in selection of principals?

(c) To what extent are superintendents and principals satisfied with current policies and practices used by school systems in the selection of principals?

(d) To what extent are recommendations in the literature regarding the selection of principals reflected in policies and practices used by school systems in the selection of principals?

2. (a) What criteria are currently used by school systems in the selection of principals in Alberta?

(b) To what extent are recommendations in the literature about effectiveness of principals reflected in criteria used by school systems in the selection of principals?

3. (a) What policies and practices relating to the evaluation of principals are currently used in Alberta?

(b) To what extent do contextual variables (e.g., size and location of school systems) influence policies and practices used in evaluation of principals?

(c) What is the perceived connection between evaluation of principals and effectiveness of principals?

(d) To what extent are superintendents and principals satisfied with current policies and practices used by school systems in the evaluation of principals?

(e) To what extent are recommendations in the literature regarding the evaluation of principals reflected in policies and practices used by school systems in the evaluation of principals?

4. (a) What criteria are currently used by school systems in the evaluation of principals in Alberta?

(b) To what extent are recommendations in the literature about effectiveness of principals reflected in criteria used by school systems in the evaluation of principals?

Definitions and Elaboration

Definitions are provided below for the key terms used in this study.

Evaluation

In the literature the terms "evaluation," "appraisal," "assessment," and "performance assessment" are used interchangeably. Subsequently, they were viewed as synonyms in this study. Different types of evaluation are referred to in the literature. The two main types are summative and formative. Fontana (1994) stated that "evaluation means knowing what existed in the past, what exists now, and how it can be modified or changed in the future so it has a position impact on change, performance, productivity, professional growth, and commitment " (p. 91). Fontana's definition more appropriately applies to formative evaluations. Summative evaluation would more properly be defined as the process in which information regarding the performance of an individual is measured against previously defined criteria for the purpose of making administrative decisions regarding tenure, promotion, dismissal, or merit salary. For the purpose of this study, Duke's (1987) definition was chosen: "Evaluation is the process by which the acceptability of performance is judged" (p. 104).

Legitimacy

Baltzell and Dentler (1983) discussed the concept of legitimacy in the selection process. They stated that the selection process was legitimate "to the extent to which respondents believed their systems followed procedures that were openly described, fitted to local customs and norms, authentic rather than phony or indifferently implemented, and which result in credible selections" (p. 4). This definition was used in this study.

Policy Documents

"Policy documents" were defined as formal written policies, as well as official statements of practice or procedures relevant to selection or evaluation.

Principal Effectiveness

Johnson (1988) noted that the effectiveness of the principal is considered by many experts to be instrumental in school effectiveness. While there appears to be general agreement on this conclusion, there is no similar agreement on what constitutes effectiveness. Duke (1987) remarked that as views of organizations change so does the definition of effectiveness. A scientific management or management-by-objective perspective may define effectiveness as the extent to which a principal is able to accomplish intended goals. The human relations approach to organizations would assess principal effectiveness based on staff satisfaction, while an outcome-based emphasis would assess effectiveness on the basis of how well students perform. Many definitions, criteria, characteristics, and indicators of effectiveness appear in the literature.

For the purpose of this study the definition of effectiveness used by Johnson (1988) was chosen because it is particularly comprehensive: "The effectiveness of the principal can be regarded as the degree to which that person's attitudes and behaviors fulfil the criteria of effective leadership " (p. 16). Johnson further observed that identification of criteria relative to the specific context is prerequisite to the appraisal of any leader's effectiveness.

Principal Selection

Castetter (1996) stated that "selection is a decision-making process in which one individual is chosen over another to fill a position on the basis of how well characteristics of the individual match the requirements of the position" (p. 133). In this study, "principal selection" refers to the process of filling a vacant principalship.

Reliability

Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh (1972) defined "reliability" as "the extent to which a measuring device is consistent in measuring whatever it measures" (p. 190). In this study, the term is used in two different contexts, which have the same basic meaning. First, it describes the consistency of responses and interpretations of the data as they appear in the study. Second, the term is used in the same manner as used by Musella (1983) to refer to the consistency of information collected in the process of the selection of principals.

Selection Technology

"Selection technology" was used by Castetter (1996) to refer to the knowledge, tools, and practices incorporated into the selection process.

Validity

"Validity" was defined by Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh (1972) as "the extent to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure" (p. 190). Validity, also, is used in two different contexts with essentially the same meaning. First, it refers to the extent to which the instruments or processes address the content area which is to be studied. Second, in the selection of principals it refers to the extent to which criteria used in the selection process are related to job expectations.

Organization of the Thesis

The study is developed over nine chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the study and introduces the questions which were addressed in the study. Chapter 2 provides a review of literature relevant to the selection and evaluation of school principals. The method used to conduct the research is discussed in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 furnishes a description of the process used to choose participants for each of the three phases of the research and a description of those who actually were involved in the study.

Chapters 5 and 6 address the selection of principals. Chapter 5 focusses on the practices used in the selection of principals and compares these practices to those recommended in the literature (Specific Research Question 1). Chapter 6 concentrates on the criteria which are used by school systems during the selection process and compares them to behavioral characteristics of effective principals which are identified in the literature (Specific Research Question 2).

Chapters 7 and 8 discuss the evaluation of principals. Chapter 7 elaborates on the practices used by school systems to evaluate principals and compares current practices to those recommended in the literature (Specific Research Question 3). Chapter 8 focusses on the criteria which are used by school systems for the evaluation of school principals (Specific Research Question 4).

Chapter 9 summarizes the general findings of the study, identifies areas for further research, and recommends approaches which should be discussed by school systems in the province.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Introduction

Rudestam and Newton (1992) have noted that the review of the literature "provides a context for the proposed study and demonstrates why it is important and timely" (p. 46). Therefore, the purpose of Chapter 2 is to review literature germane to the selection and evaluation of school principals. A preliminary search of the literature revealed a paucity of research regarding practices currently in use. In fact, only three major studies conducted in the 1980s on practices used in the selection of principals were available. These related to Canada, the U.K., and the U.S. In addition, while numerous articles have been written on evaluation practices, few either describe practices being used by school systems or comment on their effectiveness.

Whereas leadership and organizational behavior have been the subject of study for decades, research regarding the human resource function in relation to organizational effectiveness is an emerging field. Castetter (1996) argued that the complexities of human resource management have only recently been considered to any extent in the educational sector. He reinforced the necessity of careful attention being given to this issue by noting that contemporary problems have bombarded educational work settings and the individuals who work in them. Unfortunately, in his view, traditional models of human resources management have not developed comprehensive strategies to cope with these "changing internal and external environments" (p. 3).

Castetter (1996) framed his discussion of the selection and appraisal of educational personnel within a broader focus than does much of the literature:

> The goals of the human resources function in any educational system are to attract, develop, retain, and motivate personnel in order to (a) achieve the system's purposes, (b) assist members in satisfying position and group performance standards, (c) maximize personnel career development, and (d) reconcile individual and organizational objectives. (p. 3)

He further stated that "the human resources function...is divided into 11 areas: planning, bargaining, recruitment, selection, induction, appraisal, development, compensation, justice, continuity, and information" (p. 3). Also, Pounder and Young (1996) have criticized much of the literature regarding selection as being too narrow in its focus. Rather than restricting consideration to screening, evaluating, and selecting a suitable candidate, they emphasized the necessity to give more attention to attracting and recruiting candidates.

The functions addressed by this study--selection and evaluation of principals--are only two facets of what is a continuum of activity in human resource management. In particular, the chapter discusses (a) effectiveness of schools, (b) effectiveness of principals, (c) the link between effectiveness of principals and the effectiveness of schools, (d) the relationship of selection and evaluation to principal effectiveness (e) practices used in the selection and evaluation of principals which are identified in the literature, and (f) recommendations for improving practices in both functions.

Effectiveness

As mentioned in Chapter 1, both the effectiveness of schools and the effectiveness of principals have received considerable attention in the literature and in public forums. The school effectiveness literature was chosen in preference to the school improvement literature because it was perceived to be more closely related to the literature on effectiveness of principals.

Effectiveness of Schools

Miskel, Fevurly, and Stewart (1979) have provided this succinct statement:

> Perceived organizational effectiveness is the subjective evaluation of a school's productivity, adaptability and flexibility. In summary, effective schools are perceived to produce products and services in greater quantity, with better quality: to show flexibility; and to exhibit adaptability to a greater extent than less effective organizations. (p. 98)

Several researchers (e.g., Edmonds, 1979; Fullan, 1985; Lezotte, 1986; Purkey and Smith, 1982, 1983) concluded that a core of relatively consistent variables exists which contribute to school effectiveness. These include (a) strong school leadership, (b) high expectations for student achievement, (c) a pleasant work-oriented atmosphere, (d) a strong emphasis on the acquisition of academic skills, (e) frequent student assessment, and (f) a high level of teacher effectiveness. However, Johnson and Holdaway (1990) noted that other research disputed the generalizability of these findings. Criticisms were based on an over-reliance on potentially suspect assessments, unfounded assumptions regarding the causality of effectiveness, and the fact that the majority of schools studied were elementary schools. which served primarily urban, poor, and minority students.

Further, Sergiovanni (1995) argued that Edmonds (1979) and Brookover and Lezotte (1979) used a relatively narrow definition of effectiveness. He remarked that "student achievement in basic skills is undoubtedly the most popular criterion for determining an effective school" (p. 149) The primary reason lies in the ease with which it is possible to define and measure school effectiveness.

Earlier, Rowan, Dwyer, and Bossert (1982) had stated their concerns with the limited focus on student achievement as a measure of effectiveness:

> By viewing school effectiveness as a unidimensional phenomenon, current research neglects a number of interesting and important issues. For example, numerous constituencies view the purpose of schooling as broader than simple academic training. Citizenship training, development of self-esteem, independence training, and the development of self-discipline exist as important alternative goals. By focussing exclusively on academic achievement, much of the literature on school effectiveness has ignored the relationship between achieving effectiveness in academic outcomes and achieving effectiveness among these other dimensions. (p. 11)

Lipsitz (1984) provided a broader definition of school effectiveness in her study of middle schools by using these six general criteria:

1. These schools contain safe and orderly environments where student achievement is up to or exceeds expectations. More specifically, scores on standardized achievement tests are above or approach the county mean or the mean of some other comparative reference group; low absenteeism and turnover

> rates among students and staff exist; vandalism and victimization are not frequent occurrences or indeed are nonexistent; there is lack of destructive graffiti; and low suspension rates for students exist.
>
> 2. These schools respond appropriately to the developmental levels of students. Basic skills and other intellectual objectives are considered important, but are best pursued in a healthy psychological environment for students.
> 3. Teachers and students in these schools pursue competency in learning.
> 4. These schools are accepted within the context of the local community and its expectations.
> 5. These schools enjoy a reputation for excellence in the community.
> 6. These schools function well in response to or despite national issues such as desegregation, busing, and other problems.
>
> (p. 11)

Similarly, Gunn and Holdaway (1986) concluded that the strongest predictors of school effectiveness were rooted in "(1) the effectiveness of teachers and administrators in handling unexpected overloads of work or emergencies, (2) the effectiveness of teachers and administrators in demonstrating a professional and caring attitude, and (3) the effectiveness in providing students with satisfactory skills in language" (p. 55). They further stated that, while student outcomes were important, the most significant indicator of school effectiveness was the satisfaction and morale of teachers and students.

More recently, Duttweiler (1988, 1990) identified other distinctive characteristics appearing in literature on school effectiveness. This literature has suggested that effective schools (a) are student-centered, (b) offer academically rich programs, (c) provide instruction that promotes student learning, (d) have a positive school climate, (e) foster collegial interaction, (f) have extensive staff development, (g) practice shared-leadership, (h) foster creative problem solving, and (i) involve parents and the community.

As noted earlier, strong leadership is an important variable in school effectiveness. In 1972, a United States Senate report stated

> In many ways the school principal is the most important and influential individual in any school- - - It is his leadership that sets the tone of the school, the climate for learning, the level of

> professionalism and morale of teachers and the degree of concern for what students may or may not become - - If a school is a vibrant, innovative, child-centered place; if it has a reputation for excellence in teaching; if students are performing to the best of their ability one can almost always point to the principal's leadership as the key to success. (p. 305)

More recent literature (e.g., Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan & Lee,1982; Duke & Richard,1985; Johnson & Holdaway, 1990, 1991; and Renihan & Renihan,1984) confirms that the principal is a key determiner of school effectiveness. Therefore, attention must be directed to those characteristics, attitudes, and actions which make a principal effective, and how these variables may be assessed and enhanced.

Effectiveness of Principals

Bolman and Deal (1994) remarked that leadership style, leadership characteristics, and personal attributes are keys to successful effective leadership. Leaders must demonstrate an ethical commitment to children and education, display a sound character, possess self-knowledge, and be capable of sustaining a long-range view of education in relation to society. They further maintained that leaders must embrace and exhibit spiritual, moral, and expressive qualities.

Views regarding characteristics of leader effectiveness have changed with each new theory on leadership. Consequently, a relatively robust literature exists on the subject. However, Johnson and Holdaway (1991) concluded that there was no satisfactory consensus on attributes of either school or principal effectiveness.

A number of characteristics tend to permeate the literature. While terms vary with the writer, effective principals tend to receive a high rating on variables that relate to organizational tasks, instructional leadership, and concern for relationships. Variables discussed in the literature focus on seven areas: (a) commitment to the development, communication, and attainment of school goals (Bossert et al., 1982; Johnson & Holdaway, 1991; Johnson & Snyder, 1985; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1986; Leithwood & Steinbach,1991; and Pratt & Common, 1986), (b) concern for morale and job satisfaction of staff (Bossert et al., 1982; Gunn & Holdaway, 1986; and Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston, & Smith, 1979), (c) high expectations for instructional effectiveness (Johnson & Holdaway, 1991; Johnson & Snyder, 1985; and Pratt & Common,1986), (d) improving teacher performance (Bossert et al., 1982; Gunn & Holdaway, 1986; Johnson & Snyder, 1986; and Luck & Manatt, 1984), (e) effectiveness in decision making (Gunn & Holdaway, 1986: Johnson & Holdaway, 1990; and Leithwood & Montgomery, 1986), (f) assessment of achievement (Johnson & Snyder, 1986; and Luck & Manatt, 1984) and (g) acquisition and management of resources (Housego, 1993; Johnson & Holdaway, 1991; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1986).

Three additional themes appear in the literature which affect each of the seven strands. First, effective principals communicate well with a wide range of publics. Second, effective principals have the ability to coordinate the involvement of staff, students, parents, and other members of the community in establishing policy, setting goals, and designing strategies to facilitate their fulfilment. Finally, principals provide instructional leadership in the school. Sergiovanni (1995) noted that as an instructional leader, the principal is to evaluate and supervise teachers and direct all affairs related of teacher and learning in the school. He also maintained that direct principal leadership was only part of the answer. More important is the amount and quality of "leadership density " (p. 146) in the school which refers to the total leadership provided by professional and support staff, parents, and others on behalf of the school. Necessarily, the principal plays a key role in developing and maintaining leadership density.

While the view of the principal's role as instructional leader has been generally supported in the past (e.g., Johnson & Holdaway, 1991; and Pratt & Common, 1986), the current legal and cultural situation could challenge this narrow focus. The reality of additional responsibilities and pressures associated with school-based management, school councils, and competition will affect the scope and exercise of the principal's role in the school. In light of these changes, Dubin (1991) has argued that, to some degree, principals now function as the CEOs of their schools.

The literature on leadership and principal effectiveness in education focuses almost exclusively on individuals holding the position of principal and their behavior. While this view acknowledges the importance of the leadership role in our culture, Hart (1993) maintained that it left much about effective leadership and the succession of leaders unexamined. Duke and Iwanicki (1992) believed that effective school administration involved more than behavioral competence. They concluded that effective administration also involved the "fit" of the individual to the particular school and community. "Fit" was defined as "the extent to which a leader is perceived to be appropriately matched to a given context" (p. 26). In their study of nine principals who had been transferred or dismissed by their schools systems, Duke and Iwaniki noted that only four changes were the direct result of failure to meet superordinates' expectations. Of the other five principals who had been transferred or dismissed, three had encountered difficulties with staff, three were in conflict with parents, and three were in conflict with the community. Many of those transferred did well in their new placements.

Hart (1993) argued in favor of the importance of social relationships to effective leadership. In fact, she proposed that "in reality, the social relationships between formal leaders and their hierarchical subordinates and superordinates play an important part in their influence on the school" (p. 9). Further, Duke and Iwanicki (1992) observed that individuals occupying important roles in organizations are subject to varying expectations. Principals are particularly susceptible to varying and often conflicting expectations. Figure 2.1 illustrates the principal's role as defined by varying role perceptions.

Principals have their own perceptions of their role. School staff, both professional and support, have perceptions of this role often based on what was or was not done by the previous principal. Similarly, parents and community members hold perceptions of what principals should be and how they should act. The shaded portion represents what Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, and Rosenthal (1964) referred to as the

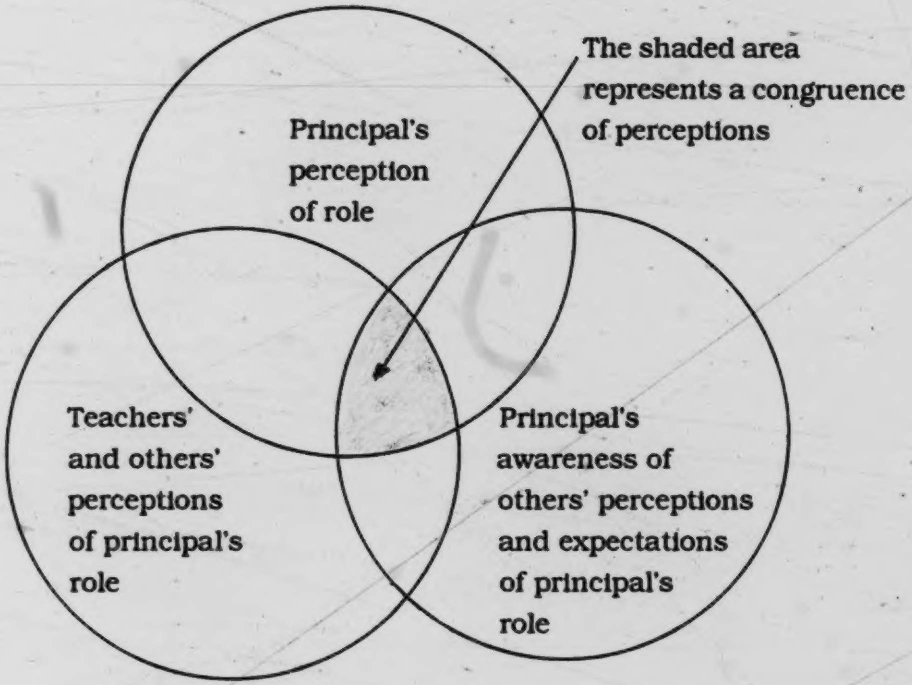
The shaded area represents a congruence of perceptions
Principal's perception of role
Teachers' and others' perceptions of principal's role
Principal's awareness of others' perceptions and expectations of principal's role

Figure 2.1 Principal's Role as Defined by Role Perceptions (adapted from Hart & Bredeson, 1996).

"received role" (p.16) of the principal. This "received role" is based on the principal's understanding of the formal role description provided by the school system and perceptions of what others expect the principal to do which are filtered through the principal's unique educational philosophy. The degree to which the received role and resulting principal behavior match the expectations of others determines the degree of fit.

Duke and Iwaniki (1992) concluded that a lack of fit is directly linked to the extent to which role conflicts cannot be minimized. Therefore, effective principals must scan the environment to identify what their constituencies expect of them. Further, they observed that the problem of "fit" may be mitigated in some situations. For example, a system with long-term stable central leadership, with clear goals and objectives, with consistency between formal and real job expectations, and with administrators who are hired and supervised professionally provides a setting in which role conflict should be minimized.

Because principals are considered to be a key determinant of effectiveness in schools (Hart, 1992: and Johnson & Holdaway, 1991), it is important to have effective principals, those who are deeply committed to quality education and are able to motivate other stakeholders to share this vision. This may be accomplished by two major means: (a) selecting effective principals to new positions (Webb et al., 1994), or (b) improving effectiveness through evaluation (Hart, 1992; Heck & Marcoulides, 1996; Stufflebeam & Nevo, 1993).

Selection of Principals

This section addresses the importance of the selection process, factors affecting the selection of principals, selection practices reported in the literature, and promising alternative practices. Suggestions from the literature for improving the selection process are also reviewed. Because an extensive body of literature exists on selection of principals, a conscious decision was made to exclude corresponding and even more extensive literature on selection of administratators in public, private, and non-profit organizations. (The same decision was made for the evaluation literature for the same reason.)

Importance

Webb, Montello, and Norton (1994) stated that one of the quickest ways to improve services is through proper screening and selection. They suggested that the selection of a proven leader with both the necessary competencies and philosophical predispositions supportive of the desired direction of the school program would provide a solid foundation for institutional growth and improvement. However, Brown (1982) argued that changing principals can be disruptive. In fact, he asserted that a change may have no or perhaps a negative causal impact on organizational effectiveness. Similarly, Miskel and Cosgrove (1985) observed that while conventional wisdom holds that changing administrators will improve school performance, "the replacement of principals is a disruptive event because it changes the lines of communication, realigns relationships of power, affects decision-making, and disturbs the equilibrium of normal activities" (p. 88). More recently, Hart and Bredeson (1996) have confirmed the possible negative effects of succession. They believed that if contextual factors are ignored by either those recruiting a successor or the successor the transition has a high probability of failure. Therefore, significant attention must be given to local expectations and the culture of the school and the community.

However, Miskel and Cosgrove (1985) concluded the process of selection can influence the consequences of succession on the organization. They identified two key factors which contribute to a successful transition: (a) decision-makers who are capable of rendering a decision acceptable to the candidates, the school staff, and the community, and (b) an appropriate talent pool. In addition, Hart (1993) posited that successful succession of principals is dependent on the quality and degree of the socialization process planned and implemented by the hiring school system. If no attempt is made by the school system to socialize the new principal to the culture and goals of the system, socialization will take place at the school level. Depending on the principal's philosophical commitment and understanding of the school culture, the principal may be successful in socializing the staff to the principal's vision of schooling. The staff may also socialize the new principal to the status quo in the school.

Musella and Lawton (1986) stated that the selection of administrators and supervisors was the most important personnel decision that a school board could make. In an earlier study, Baltzell and Dentler (1983) also recognized the importance of the selection process and identified three specific reasons for taking this position. First, principals derive a "sense of mission" (p. 16) from the process of selection. They argued that a well-developed process, consistently implemented, can communicate jurisdiction goals, the particular outcomes visioned, and the degree of support which may be expected to the successful candidate. Second, the selection process has symbolic value. Each step in the process adds to the mosaic defining the jurisdiction's beliefs and method of operation. A process performed with integrity builds confidence in the jurisdiction, its vision, and its commitment to education. Similarly, Webb et al. (1994) emphasized the significance of the message conveyed by the process. Finally, Baltzell and Dentler (1983) posited that selecting a principal is the most visible action a superintendent performs. In the process, the superintendent communicates a sense of personal values, goals, and a style of leadership. Webb et al. (1994) added another element consistently held in the literature, namely the pivotal position held by the principal in the school.

Factors Affecting the Selection of Principals

Researchers (e.g., Castetter, 1996; Musella, 1983; and Pounder & Young, 1996) have identified a number of external and internal factors which could affect the selection of principals.

External factors. External factors listed by Musella (1983) in a handbook for selecting principals included (a) current labor market, (b) economic climate, (c) public opinion, (d) human rights legislation and policies, (e) certification regulations and procedures, and (f) enrolment status.

The size of the potential talent pool has an impact on the selection of principals. Musella (1983) noted that while teacher supply in Ontario varied over the years, the numbers of potential administrators varied from adequate to oversupply. Baltzell and Dentler (1983) observed in their study in the United States that there was frequently an oversupply of qualified candidates. In fact, many qualified people did not even apply to openings advertised. More recently, Pounder (1990, 1994) and Levin and Young (1994) predicted a shortage of candidates for the remainder of this decade and beyond because of high administrative turnover related, in part, to retirements. In either situation, the number of available candidates will influence actions taken by school systems.

Further, in times of decreasing resources, the public attention is directed to education costs and begins to raise questions regarding the effectiveness of schools and staff. The pressure to produce better results with fewer resources will focus attention on the ability of administrators to produce desired results. Additionally, limited finances exert pressure on school systems to hire younger principals who receive lower salaries.

In 1983, Musella remarked that there had been an increasing trend to "the right" with increased interest in discipline, a move back to the basics, better results, and parental involvement. This trend has continued and in Alberta this interest has prompted government to develop regulations to ensure that these concerns are addressed. Moreover, the force of public opinion emphasizes the need to match principals to the school and the community.

Several researchers (e.g., Castetter, 1996; Levin & Young, 1994; Musella, 1983; and Pounder & Young, 1996) have asserted that issues which led to human rights legislation and affirmative action have yet to be resolved. These and other issues, such as employment equity addressed by provincial and federal legislation and policies, influence board actions when principals and other staff are hired. For example, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (1993) has the potential to substantially alter the manner in which data are collected and used during the selection process.

Miklos (1988) noted that all 50 states in the United States required certification. In contrast, Musella (1983) observed that in Canada only Ontario required similar certification. However, the licensing of professionals rests with provincial and state authorities and circumstances are subject to change. While public concern over the standards of education have influenced government policy to be more demanding of eligibility criteria, in times of a shortage of supply government regulations are often relaxed.

Practices vary in periods of decreasing enrolments. Jurisdictions often attempt to move existing administrators both horizontally and vertically to accommodate staff reduction. Frequently, this results in the use of temporary placements and transfers within the jurisdiction where seniority is the major consideration for appointment. Subsequently, recruitment is limited to internal candidates.

Internal factors. Internal factors cited by Musella (1983) included (a) collective agreements, (b) organizational structure, and (c) selection policies and practices.

Collective agreements generally have more application to the selection and evaluation of teachers than principals. However, provisions regarding seniority may affect decisions made regarding the appointment of principals. In addition, decisions regarding the twinning of schools, creating more positions of responsibility, or redefining the roles of individuals in positions of responsibility can affect the demand for administrators.

Similarly, decisions regarding who will be involved and at what stage in the selection process affect the design of selection practices. Pounder and Young (1996) stated that personality characteristics of selectors have a marked influence on selection outcomes. Individuals who display "warmth" are more successful in convincing desired candidates to accept an offer of employment. Further, Miskel and Cosgrove (1985) noted that selection policies and practices may also affect the size and composition of the candidate pool. For example, a school system may stipulate that candidates for an advertised position must possess a minimum of five years experience in a similar position.

Also, Musella (1983) remarked that the timing of the selection process influences outcomes. Typically, a vacancy advertised during the middle of the school year would probably attract fewer candidates than if the selection process were initiated later in the school year.

Selection Procedures

Musella (1983) mentioned six components critical to the process of selecting principals: (a) identification of system and school goals, priorities and needs; (b) a descriptive analysis of the position which focusing on expectations for the individual in the setting; (c) recruitment; (d) data collection, analysis and evaluation; (e) screening and selection decisions; and (f) training. He further observed that these steps are sequential and dependent on the thoughtful completion of the previous step.

Similarly, Baltzell and Dentler (1983) reviewed selection of principals in the United States and identified practices comparable to those noted by Musella (1983). They reported their findings in five basic categories: "the vacancy" (p. 4) outlined actions undertaken subsequent to the vacancy announcement; "selection criteria" (p. 5) focussed on the development of criteria to frame the process of selection; "forming the applicant pool" (p. 7) concentrated on activities related to soliciting interest in the position; "screening" (p. 9) discussed three levels of screening ranging from an initial check to determine whether the candidate was credentialed to a final interview prior to the employment decision; and "employment decision" (p.13) which noted practices and concerns related to the selection decision.

More recently, Castetter (1996) outlined a similar list of tasks which are important to successful selection practices.

For the purpose of this study, a list of processes extracted from the literature will be discussed.

Developing selection policy. Castetter (1996) emphasized that adequate policy development was of primary importance to the selection process. He argued that policies reveal to the community and potential candidates the systems commitment to hiring the best candidates possible. In addition, policies incorporate statements regarding system goals and objectives which serve to give direction to the process.

Initiating the process. According to Baltzell and Dentler (1983), the first step following policy development is framing the vacancy announcement. Openings may result from resignations, retirements, deaths, dismissals, or reassignments. The reasons for and timing of the opening often influence the action subsequently taken. Often an interim principal is appointed to fill the position while the process of finding a successor is conducted. How long the interim principal remains in that position depends on the time of the year and local practice.

In their study, Baltzell and Dentler (1983) remarked that certain contradictions often surface at this stage in the process. While superintendents and other senior officers shared the view that the position was important and that much time was dedicated to the search for a replacement, the search was often limited in outreach. Specific openings were seldom clearly identified because senior officers looked to internal "shuffling" to fill positions. When internal transfers had been completed, candidates for the advertised position were left to consider the last opening available.

Defining the position. Lipham, Rankin, and Hoeh (1985) have remarked that the vacancy announcement conveys a great deal of information about the school system's selection process. As indicated earlier, Musella (1983) concluded that identification of system and school goals, priorities, and needs combined with a descriptive analysis of the position were critical to the process of selection. He maintained that identification of goals focussed on the environment of the position while the descriptive analysis centred on expectations for the principal in that environment. Moreover, he argued that these analyses cannot be completed until goals and priorities have been established. More recently, Castetter (1996) added that detailed analyses of the current and future needs of the system and the school position was necessary to guide the selection process. He noted that a long-term view of the system and system needs resulted in a better match of between the skills and characteristics of candidates and the needs of the position.

Further, Harris and Monk (1992) suggested that "a job description should contain all of the essential information that a prospective employee would need to 'size up' the job, including title, qualifications, supervisor, supervision responsibilities, goal [sic], performance responsibilities, terms of employment and evaluation criteria" (p. 95). However, Baltzell and Dentler (1983) pointed out that vacancy advertisements were frequently generic in nature because of the practices of using internal transfers to fill the immediate vacancy.

Forming the applicant pool. Baltzell and Dentler (1983) observed that an absence of specificity in criteria selected and concern for "fit" (p. 7) could lead to an applicant pool consisting of local candidates who have been "standing in line" for some time. The typical local candidate was identified as a teacher or coach who had invested extra time in school activities and, therefore, had been noticed by the principal. Furthermore, the principal often provided such people with more opportunity for visibility , encouraged them to pursue certification, and recommended them to the superintendent. As a result, the candidates moved up the ranks and sponsorship continued until their "turn" came. The authors also noted that this socialization process appeared to be the same regardless of race or gender. This process of socialization into administrative positions in schools has also been reported by Miklos (1988) and Hart (1992). However, Levin and Young (1994) argued that many qualified women were denied the opportunity for advancement because of perceptions of merit held by potential sponsors.

A number of researchers (e.g., Baltzell & Dentler, 1983; and Musella & Lawton, 1986) concluded that many school systems favor promotion of internal candidates. Miskel and Cosgrove (1985) remarked that insiders provide stability since they know the current situation and are less liable to blunder into situations unaware of possible consequences. On the other hand, they suggested that outside candidates may bring fresh ideas and act as catalysts for innovation.

As mentioned earlier, Pounder (1994) and Levin and Young (1994) predicted a shortage of candidates during the latter part of this decade and Pounder advocated recruitment of administrative candidates. Several researchers (e.g., Baltzell & Dentler, 1983; Castetter, 1996; and Pounder & Young, 1996)) have posited that increasing the applicant pool can be accomplished in two ways: recruiting candidates and training existing staff. Recruiting outside the jurisdiction presents the potential of adding highly qualified candidates to the pool. Such recruitment extends beyond general advertising of positions and suggests that systems actively seek desirable candidates who are known to be performing well in their current appointments. However, in their initial study of two American public school systems, Baltzell and Dentler found that no more than 10% of the 30 principals studied were recruited from the outside and of these most had strong inside connections.

An alternative method of increasing the talent pool suggested by Baltzell and Dentler (1983) was the development of internship programs. According to the authors, internship programs were similar to informal sponsorships, but were more focussed in purpose. Formal internship programs also increased opportunities for women and other minority candidates to access administrative positions thereby addressing concerns of equity. However, they found that many capable individuals did not apply and several individuals who did apply were not considered to be serious candidates. Moreover, the number of certified candidates often exceeded the demand.

Data used to evaluate candidates. In a 1986 study of the selection and promotion of principals in Ontario, Musella and Lawton reported that the following data were used to evaluate candidates: (a) letters of application, (b) resumes, (c) references, (d) statements of philosophy, (e) education, (f) recommendations from previous supervisors, and (g) written self-evaluations. Earlier, Baltzell and Dentler (1983) identified similar data but added evidence of certification and awards or honors held. More recently, Castetter (1996) noted that these data were used in school systems, but concluded that additional data such as physical examinations and various forms of personnel testing may also be useful.

Resumes, references, and interviews rated the highest in terms of use in the process of selection, yet some researchers (e.g., Harris & Monk,1992; Miskel & Cosgrove,1985; Morgan, 1988; and Musella & Lawton, 1986) have argued that these are least predictive of success.

Screening candidates. There are two basic steps in the screening process leading to interviews which result in the selection decision. According to Pounder and Young (1996), the initial step consists of a paper screen intended to determine whether the candidate possesses minimal certification and experience requirements. Step two is designed to establish a list of candidates from which the successful candidate is chosen and is often accomplished by evaluating the written documentation provided by prospective candidates. However, Baltzell and Dentler (1983) reported that, in some school systems, formal screening interviews were used to establish the list of potential candidates. They noted that screening interviews provided an opportunity for candidates to improve or reduce their candidacy potential depending on their performance. These interviews were frequently conducted by the superintendent and assistants or a small committee including parents and teachers. However, the authors believed that the committee approach offered some distinct advantages because it allowed various constituencies to test the candidate and often provided the successful candidate an opportunity to win useful support for the job ahead.

Employment decision. The final step in the screening process ends in a recommendation for employment. Previous studies (e.g., Baltzell & Dentler, 1983; and Musella & Lawton, 1986) have revealed that final interviews were generally conducted by the superintendent. This process could include a genuine choice between two or more candidates or the confirmation of the preferred candidate of the screening committee. In most cases, the superintendent was not bound to make a choice from the finalists from the screening interviews, however pressure to do so was great. The superintendent's recommendation was then presented to the board of education for approval.

Interviewing candidates is extremely important, but many researchers have expressed concern with the process. Baltzell and Dentler (1983) stated that, while screening interviews have great symbolic importance for legitimizing candidates, the short time (30 to 40 minutes) and imprecise questioning raise serious doubts regarding their predictive value. Similarly, Morgan, Hall, and Mackay (1983) expressed a concern that the final interview was all too often "the anticlimax rather than the climax of the selection process" (p. 89). Further, they remarked that a candidate's strengths which may have been evident early in the process could not compensate for under-performance during the interview. During their study, they observed final interviews in which candidates performed below the standard of their earlier performance. In other instances, the reverse was true. However, the final interview was the deciding factor in the employment decision.

While several researchers (e.g., Castetter, 1996; Hall, Mackay, & Morgan, 1988; Harris & Monk, 1992; Musella, 1983; and Musella & Lawton, 1986) have commented on the importance of using accepted job-related criteria in the process of selection, the existence of appropriate criteria is not a guarantee of their use. Baltzell and Dentler (1983) pointed out that districts in their study had stated eligibility criteria, but in very few cases was a concrete link between the criteria and the vacancy requirements evident during the initial screening process, although consideration may have been given later in the process. Similarly, Morgan (1988) remarked that frequently non-job-related factors dominated the process of selection in Britain. In the absence of explicitly accepted criteria, individual selectors resorted to personally constructed standards against which candidates were measured.

While several researchers (e.g., Baltzell & Dentler, 1983; Harris & Monk, 1992; Morgan, 1988; and Musella & Lawton, 1986) have reported that the employment interview is the most common method of screening applicants, research demonstrates the weakness of this practice.

Webster (1982) outlined 10 research findings gleaned from the literature over a period of years which demonstrate the complexity and vulnerability of the interview process.

> 1. Interviewers who select staff for plant or clerical positions usually reach decisions within a few minutes. They quickly know whether or not they want an applicant and then seek supporting evidence. It is easier to change an early favorable impression than an early negative one.
> 2. Unfavorable information almost always carries more weight than favorable data.
> 3. The effect of unfavorable information about an applicant depends both on when it is perceived and when the judge records impressions.
> 4. Once a judge is committed to accept an applicant, additional information increases confidence in the decision but does not improve its quality.
> 5. Nonverbal as well as verbal interactions influence decisions.
> 6. Training and experience have minimal effects on the quality of judgment.
> 7. Training may reduce interviewer error but there is no evidence reduction of error improves judgment.
> 8. One uses a different mental process to describe an individual from that used to pass judgment.
> 9. If several really promising or very unpromising applicants have been evaluated in succession, one who is 'average' will be under- or over-rated.
> 10. Interviewers develop a stereotype of the good applicant and seek to match applicant to stereotype. (pp. 13-14)

More recently, Harris and Monk (1992) have remarked that "despite its widespread use, the employment interview has a long history of low validity for selection" (p. 117). They concluded that the lack of validity can be attributed to the careless manner in which interviews are conducted.

Further, Morgan (1988) noted that the source of support among selectors for characteristics displayed by candidates had a direct influence on whether these characteristics were viewed positively or negatively. Similarly, Nelson and Quick (1994) argued that highly cohesive groups tend to avoid conflict and the presence of directive leadership often suppresses adequate exploration of possible alternatives.

However, Harris and Monk (1992) posited that interviews could be useful if these conditions were met: (a) the interviewer is extremely careful about the information collected and the inferences which were drawn from it; (b) interview formats are well constructed to gain responses that were describable and relevant to effective performance; (c) interviewers are adequately trained; and (d) panel interviews are used since they provide multiple inputs to the decision-making process. Further, if records of impressions gained by selectors during the interview are kept and compared with the actual performance of the principal, mistakes may be avoided in subsequent selections. Castetter (1996) and Pounder and Young (1996) added that the use of structured interviews by trained selectors who follow a proper guide significantly increases the reliability and validity of the interview. In addition, Morgan (1988) suggested that impressions derived from interviews could be enhanced by the use of written and oral exercises in other contexts. He also noted that involvement of non-traditional selectors, such as external assessors, would be beneficial.

Baltzell and Dentler (1983) and Musella and Lawton (1986) remarked on differences in the numbers and sources of the individuals involved in selection. In some circumstances selection is restricted to central office administrative staff and the board, while other systems involve teachers, parents, and senior principals from other schools in the system. Miskel and Cosgrove (1985) concluded that board members generally do not choose directly because their primary role is policy development. In contrast, Baltzell and Dentler (1983) found that some board members do get involved in the process. In England, Morgan (1988) reported direct involvement of board members. In fact, both the local educational authority and school governors are involved in the selection process. Further, Morgan commented on difficulties in the process resulting from role ambiguity between the two groups.

Alternative Procedures

Some school systems have explored means of enhancing the selection process. Three initiatives are discussed below: assessment centres, internships, and preservice training.

Assessment centres. Assessment centres have been used to identify potential leaders in the non-education sector for at least four decades. The educational sector did not begin to explore the potential of similar centers until the National Association of Secondary School Principals established an assessment centre in 1975. The purpose of the centre was to test the ability of potential leadership candidates in these 12 behavioral dimensions associated with effective leadership: problem analysis, judgment, organizational ability, decisiveness, leadership, sensitivity, stress tolerance, oral communication skill, written communication skill, range of interests, personal motivation, and educational values. Several researchers (e.g., Baltzell & Dentler, 1983; DuPerron, 1997: Hersey, 1980; Morgan et al., 1983; Pounder and Young, 1996; and Schmitt, Noe, Meritt, & Fitzgerald, 1984) have recognized the value of assessment centres for improving personnel practices. The first franchise was established in Canada at the University of Western Ontario in 1985 and according to Allison (1989) has "been positively received by school system administrators and prospective principals alike" (p. 1). However, Allison cautioned that assessment centres are not infallible and cannot unerringly select the best or cull the worst candidates. Further, he noted that although the initial development work on the conceptual framework and simulation exercises of the NASSP model were relevant to the work environment of the principal, the process and content of the assessment did not necessarily focus on or represent an ideal set of competencies for the principalship. In spite of these weaknesses, assessment centres continue to provide a valuable tool for screening potential candidates. Duperron (1997) pointed out that assessment centres have had limited impact in Canada because of restricted access to the existing centres.

Internship programs. Several researchers (e.g., Baltzell and Dentler,1983; and Anderson, 1991) have reported the use of internship programs to develop administrative potential. Baltzell and Dentler described the Administrative Internship Program (AIP) used by the Hayward Unified School District in California, which was intended to counteract the general lack of preparation of new candidates for administrative positions. An equally important function of the program was to combat selection through sponsorship. The process served to open the ranks for women and other minority groups. Applicants had to submit a letter of request and complete a problem exercise. Candidates passing a two-stage screening process were allowed into the internship program which included a variety of opportunities for training. While Baltzell and Dentler concluded that this was the best program that they had studied, there was no research confirming its benefit. Nevertheless, Anderson (1991) noted that "carefully designed and supervised, internships most closely approximate the scope and complexity of an actual position" (p. 17).

Pre-service training. Musella (1983) recognized the importance of adequate training for principals and further noted that if training prior to appointment was lacking it was absolutely essential to provide training immediately thereafter. More recently, Lipham, Rankin, and Hoeh (1985) have posited that pre-service preparation of principals is irrevocably entwined with the principal selection process but concluded that current preparation for the principalship is inadequate. Several researchers (e.g., Campbell, Kiernan, & Stites, 1994; Hill, Gresso, & Hill, 1994; and Hill & Lynch, 1994) have reported on recent initiatives to improve preparation for those aspiring to administrative positions. For example, the National Association of Secondary School Principals has forged an alliance with four universities in the southeastern United States to restructure pre-service preparation for principals.

Similarly, Bolam and McMahon (1995) outlined an experimental process established in Great Britain where the government funded a nation-wide mentoring pilot program for new head teachers. Participation was voluntary and those choosing to participate were given five days of training, and seven days of release time over a one-year period to accommodate interaction between the mentors and mentees. While Southworth (1995) noted that both benefits and disadvantages were reported, there was an overwhelmingly positive response from project participants. Although mentorships were intended to facilitate peer contact in support of beginning head teachers, they were beneficial to both mentor and mentee. On the other hand, Southworth observed that the project encountered both real and potential problems. Although matching worked reasonably well, a mismatch was always possible. Moreover, the project was established when roles were changing making it difficult to anticipate the needs of new head teachers. Finally, the possibility of a mentor passing on attitudes and advice contrary to the vision basic to the new role could not be avoided.

Traditionally, various types of inservice programs have been used to assist practising principals to improve their performance, but Lipham et al. (1985) have stated that these attempts have been very meagre. They concluded that administrator associations need additional support to enable them to provide assistance to principals already in practice.

Assessment centres, internships, pre-service training, and in-service practices such as mentorships all have potential for improving personnel practices but they are costly. In the Ontario study, Musella and Lawton (1986) were concerned that the efficiencies exercised by some school systems triumphed over good practice. Therefore, the caution expressed by Lipham et al. (1985) is appropriate:

> Although some may complain that assessment centres and apprenticeship programs require too much time and money, it is generally recognized that attention paid to selection is well worth the effort, both immediately and in the long run, since the initial investment is much less expensive than subsequent remedial efforts [because] once people are in they are hard to remove. (p. 294)

Recommendations for Selecting Principals

Castetter (1996) has argued that a well-designed recruitment and selection process is an important contributor to school system effectiveness. Further, he noted that research has demonstrated that carefully planned processes "result in greater employee commitment, higher productivity, and higher quality of work" (p. 87). As mentioned earlier, Castetter remarked that long-term planning was crucial to effective selection practices. Figure 2.2 demonstrates the contrast

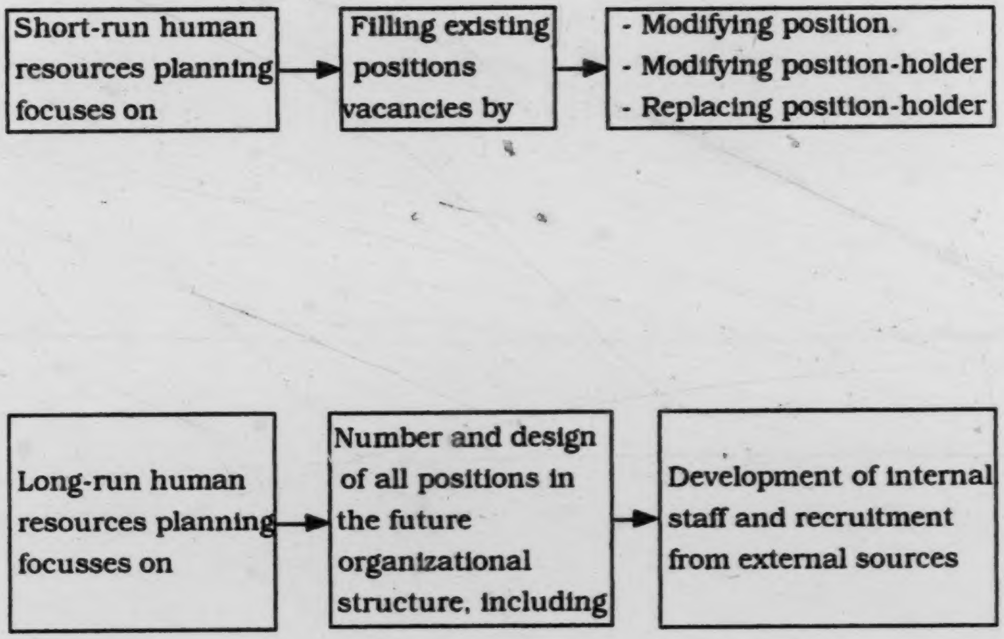
Short-run human resources planning focuses on
Filling existing positions vacancies by
- Modifying position.
- Modifying position-holder
- Replacing position-holder
Long-run human resources planning focusses on
Number and design of all positions in the future organizational structure, including
Development of internal staff and recruitment from external sources

Figure 2.2 Focus of Short- and Long-run Human Resources Planning (adapted from Castetter, 1996, p. 89).

between short-term and long-term human resources planning.

Castetter (1996) stated that short-term resources planning is primarily concerned with "(a) affecting a high degree of compatibility between existing positions and people and (b) filling current position openings with existing personnel" (p. 88). Short-term staffing problems involve changing the position, changing the individual in the position, or modifying the position. Modification of the position usually occurs when the individual holding the position does not have the qualifications to perform position expectations. On the other hand, long-term human resources planning differs from short-run planning in these ways:

> (a) the planning focus is on the more remote future, the totality of positions in the future organizational structure, and personnel required to staff those positions; (b) the planning process is interdependent with other long-term functional planning, such as that required for nonhuman resources, instructional programs, and instructional support programs; (c) present personnel must be evaluated and, when possible, placed in an ideal position; and (d) the gap between present and anticipated personnel must be realized through the recruitment process. (p. 89)

Moreover, long-term human resources planning requires time to conceive ways to design a high degree of congruency between staffing and planning for functional needs of the school organization.

Review of the literature revealed three important factors to consider in the selection of principals. First, prospective candidates must possess skills and knowledge necessary to make them effective managers. Second, there successful candidate's vision and goals for education must be compatible with the mission of the jurisdiction. Third, there must be a fit between the new principal and the staff, parents, and the community. Subsequently, the process of selection used must include elements which will address these three dimensions.

Some researchers (e.g., Baltzell and Dentler, 1983; Musella, 1983; and Musella & Lawton, 1986) have consistently emphasized the need for carefully planned and thorough processes. They espoused hard preparation, rigorous interview standards, challenging written work, and constant feedback as part of the screening process. Recognizing the need for structure in the process, Musella (1983) proposed a general model

(Figure 2.3) to frame the selection of principals.

More recently, Anderson (1991) summarized the following 10 steps which should be used in selecting principals:

1. Develop written policies which declare a commitment to hiring the best individuals possible.
2. Policies should also refer to goals and objectives the Board wishes to achieve.
3. Once goals have been established a intensive job analysis should be conducted prior to beginning the selection process.
4. Create a pool of qualified candidates.
5. Develop specific selection criteria.
6. Identify the specific opening in vacancy announcements.
7. Involve a broad base of people in screening and selection.
8. Train those who are on the selection committees.
9. Use multiple means of assessment.
10. Consider varied sources of information about candidates. (pp. 44-46)

A different classification was proposed by Castetter (1996) who concluded that the selection process consists of three phases. The pre-selection phase includes (a) policy development, (b) establishment of selection procedures, (c) development of position and person profiles, (d) decisions regarding criteria to be used in the selection process, (e) identifying employment standards, and (f) deciding what predictors to use to measure adequacy of performance. The selection phase incorporates implementation of the measures chosen in phase one. Finally, the post-selection phase addresses follow-up with all candidates considered in the process. Contact can range from a notice of rejection to unsuccessful candidates to an offer of employment and a written contract for the successful candidate. These phases and components of the selection process identified by Castetter incorporate many of the steps identified in Musella's (1983) model. After consideration of these various schemata, the selection process identified by Anderson (1991) was chosen as the primary framework for further discussion in this thesis because it was a synthesis of current literature on the subject.

Develop written policies. Anderson (1991) argued that policies serve a two-fold purpose: (a) they declare the board's commitment to hire the best individuals possible to the community, staff, and prospective

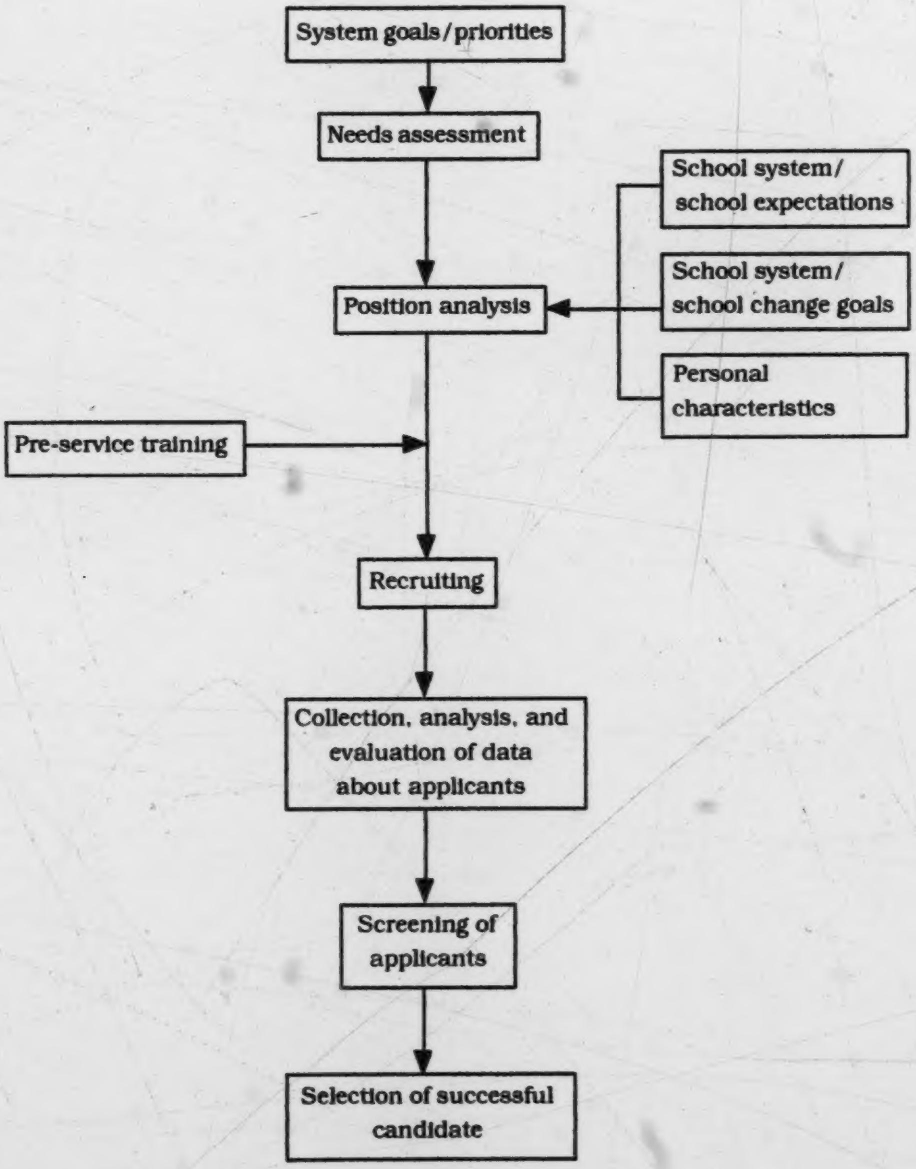
System goals/priorities
Needs assessment
School system/ school expectations
School system/ school change goals
Personal characteristics
Position analysis
Pre-service training
Recruiting
Collection, analysis, and evaluation of data about applicants
Screening of applicants
Selection of successful candidate

Figure 2.3 A General Selection Model (adapted from Musella, 1983).

candidates; and (b) they outline the goals and objectives the board wishes to achieve. Castetter (1996) added a third purpose for policy: the establishment of procedural guidelines from which administrator's responsible for the selection process would operate. On the other hand, Castetter noted that detailed procedures would be difficult to establish because

> (a) decisions needed in each category are complex and difficult to establish with finality because of insufficiency of knowledge relating to various performance predictors and (b) extensive variation in the size and other characteristics of educational organizations keeps the model from being a universal approach to the selection process. (p. 142)

While Musella (1983) did not identify the need for policy, he emphasized the importance of a critical review of the goals and priorities of the school system. However, the current legal climate demands that school systems develop clear policy regarding the selection process.

Conduct intensive job analyses. Musella (1983) further noted that a review of system goals and priorities should incorporate a detailed analysis of the position to be filled. Other researchers (e.g., Anderson, 1991; Castetter, 1996; Morgan, 1988; and Musella & Lawton, 1986) have subsequently reinforced the necessity of a rigorous job analysis. A conceptual framework developed by Musella to assist in this process is outlined in Figure 2.4.

Musella (1983) maintained that the analysis of any position should follow a three-step procedure. First, job responsibilities, goals for change, and desirable personal characteristics for all positions in the school jurisdiction should be reviewed and amended as necessary. Second, the same three considerations should be analyzed for the three levels of schooling: (a) elementary, (b) junior high or middle school, and (c) senior high school. Finally, job responsibilities, goals for change,and desired personal characteristics need to be tailored to the specific job. Castetter (1996) posited that the position analysis is based on the assumption the there are clearly delineated requirements for each position. Further, if these requirements have not been articulated, the process of selection should not proceed. He remarked that these

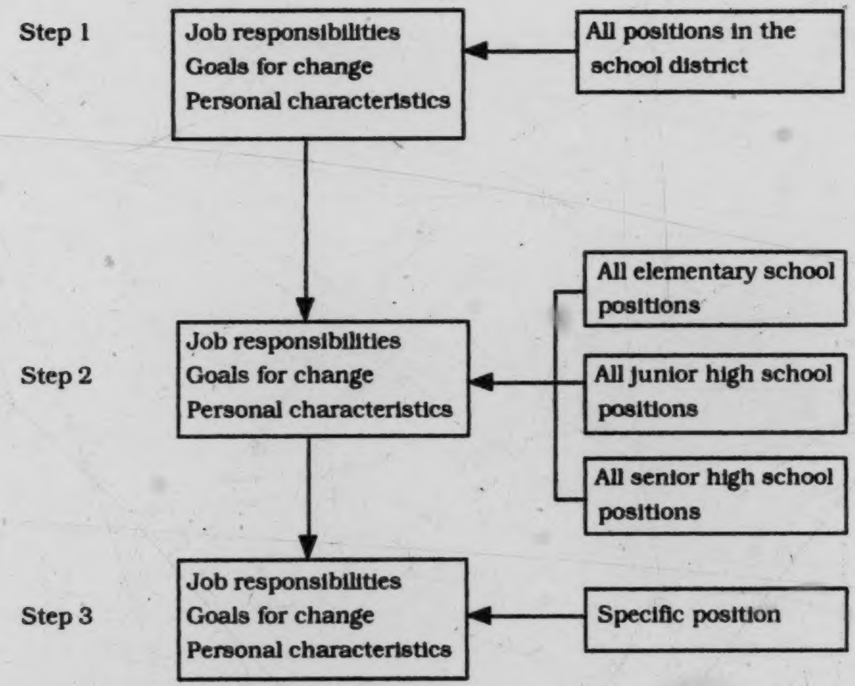
Step 1
Job responsibilities
Goals for change
Personal characteristics
All positions in the school district
Step 2
Job responsibilities
Goals for change
Personal characteristics
All elementary school positions
All junior high school positions
All senior high school positions
Step 3
Job responsibilities
Goals for change
Personal characteristics
Specific position

Figure 2.4 Developing the Position Analysis for the Principal (adapted from Musella, 1983).

requirements should include (a) principal responsibilities, (b) principal organizational relationships, (c) areas of authority, and (d) performance indicators. Castetter added this last area because he maintained that judgments regarding an individual's performance in a position should be based on the degree to which behavior in the position conforms to requirements articulated. This is discussed further regarding criteria to be used in the process.

Create a pool of qualified candidates. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, Baltzell and Dentler (1983) pointed out that the candidate pool can be increased by recruitment, and training. Anderson (1991) argued that schools systems should begin to identify potential candidates before needs arise. Moreover, he remarked that systems should develop a "pipeline" (p. 45) to the principalship which would include training of potential internal candidates. He also declared that school systems should recruit widely which would include external recruitment.

Develop specific selection criteria. Anderson (1991) posited that criteria used in the selection of principals should include all the duties and skills required in the position. Further, Castetter (1996) suggested that a practical means of determining what "performance criteria are to be measured and what predictors will be used to judge individual differences" (p. 153) was to define what the school system means by performance criteria for the position being considered. He noted that positions vary widely in their demands and functions, therefore, effectiveness criteria would differ from one position to another. Moreover, Castetter argued that once the selection criteria have been established, decisions must be made about what employment standards will be specified and which measures will be used to determine these standards. He stated that "a selection standard is a degree or level of excellence required for employment" (p. 153). For example, a postgraduate degree may be specified as a selection standard of employment as a principal. Adherence to this standard could easily be determined through a review of the candidate's resume. He concluded that desired standards should also be developed for other criteria used in the process (e.g., level of intelligence, level of preparation, level of experience, level of specified skills, or the quality of background).

Further, Anderson (1991) noted that formal or informal consideration should be given to the opinions of staff, students, parents, and other administrators concerning the kind of administrator they want. Information from these sources will help to increase the probability of the "fit" of the new principal to the school and the community.

Identify the specific opening in vacancy announcements. In a study of selection practices in two American public school districts, Baltzell and Dentler (1983) observed that vacancy announcements frequently did not refer to a specific opening. Senior officers anticipated some internal shuffling before a decision would be made to fill the remaining vacancy. However, Anderson (1991) argued that identifying the specific needs and characteristics of a school can help selectors choose the best individual for the position and assist the person hired prepare for a positive experience.

Involve a broad base of people in screening and selection. Anderson (1991) indicated that the use of selection teams increased the reliability of interviews and suggested that these teams include administrators, teachers, and parents. More recently, Castetter (1996) confirmed that research supported the assertion that involvement of several interviewers increased the reliability of the process.

Train individuals on selection committees. While researchers (e.g., Anderson, 1991; Castetter, 1996; Harris & Monk, 1992; and Musella & Lawton, 1986) have identified the value of a representative selection committee, they also noted that members should be thoroughly prepared. Castetter (1996) noted that

> criticisms of the interview as a selection device include the questionable validity of employment interviews, untrained interviewers, variability of interview content, question variability, uneven interpretation, premature decisions, negative approach, halo effect, interviewer bias, failure of interviewer to listen, and interviewer tendency to focus on negative information. (p. 161)

In addition to training selectors in order to minimize these potential problems identified by Castetter, Anderson (1991) stated that selectors should be trained regarding legal guidelines which can affect the selection process.

Use multiple means of assessment. Many researchers (e.g., Anderson, 1991; Castetter, 1996; Morgan, 1988; and Musella, 1983) have remarked on the necessity to use a variety of means of screening candidates. These may include (a) interviews, (b) assessment centre data, (c) written simulations, (d) clinical simulations, (e) situational questions, (f) tests of various kinds, (g) performance references, (h) medical examinations, and (i) a biographical inventory.

Consider varied sources of information about candidates. Anderson (1991) recommended that selection committees consider various sources for information about potential candidates, which could include (a) visits to the candidate's current work-site (b) references, (c) academic records, (d) recommendations in personnel files, (f) portfolios, and (e) written statements of educational philosophies prepared by the candidate.

However, Castetter (1996) observed that

> seldom is the information furnished by a referrer to be taken at face value. This is particularly true of written statements. Whether obtained by telephone, mail, or direct contact, information should be checked to determine its accuracy and to ensure its adequacy. (p. 166)

In addition to the above, Musella (1983) argued that if training was not part of the pre-selection process, it should immediately follow selection.

Conclusion

Castetter (1996) noted that casual approaches to recruitment and selection of personnel frequently result in costly problems. Ineffective performance, poor match of person to position, and additional supervision affect the operation of a school or school system and could result in costly termination procedures. Further, he concluded that even though well-designed selection procedures suffer from the probability of error and are costly to establish, they are "an organizational imperative" (p. 135).

Evaluation of Principals

The following section of this chapter deals with the importance of evaluation, purposes for evaluation, types of evaluation, means used to collect data, problems with evaluation, and recommendations for evaluating principals.

Importance of Evaluation

Ginsberg and Berry (1990) identified four primary reasons for evaluating school principals. First, principals have important roles in schools and have been identified as key determiners of effective schools. Second, the principal's job is complex. Third, the literature on principals effectiveness has identified several functions or behaviors which are associated with high principal performance. Fourth, the nature of the principal's role varies substantially among schools. Similarly, Stufflebeam and Nevo (1993) noted that systematic evaluation of principals is necessary throughout their entire career: (a) principal candidates need to be evaluated to determine whether they possess the aptitude to succeed in the position, (b) candidates graduating from principal training programs must be evaluated to determine if the level of competence acquired is sufficient to warrant certification, (c) certified principals should be examined to ascertain their suitability for a particular principalship, (d) the performance of practising principals should be assessed to determine whether they are meeting predetermined expectations, and (e) the performance of employed principals should be examined to determine whether they are deserving of special recognition.

However, for the purposes of this study, consideration will be restricted to evaluations conducted on individuals who are currently in a principalship.

Harris and Monk (1992) stated that "evaluation...is essentially a matter of deciding what we want, describing what we have, and then making judgments and/or decisions about the latter in relation to the former" (p. 151). Further, they remarked that "personnel evaluation is a three-phase process involving (1) determination of the competencies desired, (2) description of performance in terms of desired competencies, and (3) making of judgments or decisions based on the closeness of fit between the desired and described competencies" (p. 151). In addition, Castetter (1996) and Stufflebeam (1995) have suggested that standards of acceptable performance be established for each of the with desired competencies identified. These standards may be adjusted to suit the particular circumstances of the school or the experience of the principal, however they serve as a benchmark against which to assess performance.

Purposes of Evaluation

Castetter (1996) concluded that most of the purposes of evaluation may be grouped into five categories: (a) determine personnel employment status, (b) improve individual performance, (c) implement personnel actions, (d) achieve organizational goals, and (e) establish controls that regulate performance" (p. 277). Diagnostic decisions are made in the preemployment stage of the evaluation process regarding a candidate's readiness and capability to assume an administrative position. Decisions based on available data determine the individual's status of employment and placement within the organization. This aspect of evaluation was discussed more extensively earlier in the chapter.

Improvement of individual performance. Researchers and theorists interested in organizational and leader effectiveness (e.g., Castetter, 1996; Farmer, 1979; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1986; and Luck & Manatt, 1984) have directed their attention to the formative function of evaluation. This function focusses on improving individual performance by (a) measuring existing practice against desired standards, (b) providing appropriate feedback to the evaluatee, (c) providing support, and (d) monitoring progress.

Sergiovanni (1995) noted that problems often encountered with evaluation could be avoided if its meaning was expanded. Although Sergiovanni was referring primarily to the evaluation of teaching, similar applications could be made to evaluation of administrative practices. He posited that instead of a strict focus on measuring performance against predetermined standards, more attention should be given to "describing and illuminating" (p. 215) practice. According to Sergiovanni, evaluation involves more judgment than measurement. Since teaching, learning, and administrative practice are contextual, increased attention should be given to interpreting the various meanings inherent in each situation and relating outcomes to intended objectives.

While formative evaluation is critical to the improvement of individual performance, Hallinger and Murphy (1986) pointed out that it requires a significant investment of time. An inability to provide the necessary support and feedback to principals severely limits the effectiveness of formative evaluation.

Implement personnel actions. In contrast, the summative function is intended to provide information to facilitate administrative decisions. While the formative function tends to be an ongoing process, the summative function is an "end of the line" appraisal which is judgmental in nature. Harris and Monk (1992) remarked that summative evaluations were appropriate for making administrative decisions but totally inappropriate for formative purposes. Further, they recommended that one purpose at a time be addressed rather than looking for an "all in one" solution (p. 163). The information collected is used to inform program and personnel decisions. Reasons for requiring such information may include consideration for administrative placements, promotion, recommendations for performance, and retention or dismissal of a principal.

Achieve organizational goals. On the other hand, the institutional function of evaluation addresses issues and informs decisions beyond the consideration of a single or group of administrators. The institutional function centers on the effective management of the organization. Farmer (1979) outlined a number of reasons for the collection process:

-to explicitly define desired administrative roles and relationships
-to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the administrative staff in order to assign the to appropriate tasks
-to provide information on the degree of congruence between institutional policy and administrative action

> -to extend participation in decision-making
> -to serve as a model and inducement for other evaluation processes
> -to increase the awareness of administrative efforts. (pp.10 -11)

In respect to the latter, Nordvall (1979) emphasized the value of collecting information to demonstrate to external audiences the extent and quality of organizational achievement. The institutional function of evaluation is integral to government expectations outlined in the new regulations (Alberta Education,1995).

Establish controls that regulate performance. Both Castetter (1996) and Stufflebeam (1995) declared that standards of performance should be assigned to criteria used to describe the role of the principal. The criteria or role description articulates "what" the principal is expected to accomplish and the established standards define "how well" these tasks are to be accomplished. In this respect, evaluation is intended to control performance of individuals within the system.

Types of Evaluation

Heck and Marcoulides (1996) identified at least three different approaches to evaluation: (a) results-based evaluation, (b) standards or duties-based evaluation, and (c) evaluation based on evidence of the incorporation of best practices currently espoused by the literature.

Results-based evaluation focusses primarily on desired outcomes and the degree to which the principal has been able to achieve these outcomes. In the current political environment with its emphasis on accountability, results-based evaluation is receiving significant attention. Hart (1992) stated that

> While some argue that the complexity of schools makes principals' evaluation on the basis of outcomes unrealistic, the need increases for models that tie evaluation more closely with valued outcomes. With expanding diversity of structure and goals among public schools, the growing popularity of site-based management and parental governance committees, and mounting demands for accountability for outcomes rather than procedural compliance from schools, these needs can only grow. In the face of these demands, frameworks for principal evaluation tend to be atheoretical and idiosyncratic. (p.37)

Heck and Marcoulides (1996) countered that results-based evaluation is often restricted to outcomes which are easily measured. Further, they noted that individual principals should not be held accountable for the achievement of many of these outcomes because they do not have control over all of the variables upon which these outcomes depend.

A second approach to evaluation gives primary attention to the role description or duties of the principal. Stufflebeam (1995) argued that principal performance should be measured in terms of how well they have fulfilled job expectations for the position held. Some researchers (e.g., Scriven, 1995; and Stufflebeam, 1995) pointed out that job-description or duties-based evaluations emphasize standards and duties that separate the particular job from other personnel positions. Further, Stufflebeam and Nevo (1993) noted that these job descriptions should be "customized to the particular principal's job and kept up-to-date" (p.33). Moreover, Scriven (1995) and Stufflebeam and Nevo (1993) have stated that job descriptions emphasize what is required rather than what may be considered "best practice" which they regarded as an educational fad.

Conversely, Heck and Marcoulides (1996) believed that duties-based models of personnel evaluation are a useful starting point. However, they noted that much of what principals do has little influence on the effectiveness of the school. While consideration of the principal's fulfilment of job expectations is important, strict adherence to a job description has two potential failings. Unless the job description has been tailored to fit local circumstances, assessment of performance against job expectations does not recognize the unique needs of the school and the principal's efforts to address those needs. Similarly, a principal may perform all of the duties outlined in a job description without providing effective leadership to the school.

Heck and Marcoulides (1996) favored a third approach to evaluation which focuses on those behaviors--"best practices"--identified in the literature as contributing to the development of an effective school. While attention to fulfilment of job expectations and achievement of results are important, primary consideration should be given to the development and measurement of effective principal behaviors.

Evaluations which focus on results and the fulfilment of role expectations fit better with a summative approach to evaluation. In contrast, evaluation which focuses on the development and measurement of effective principal behaviors fits well within both the formative and summative function of evaluation.

Means Used to Collect Data

Lipham et al. (1985) have remarked that "no entirely satisfactory method has yet been devised for measuring the principal's performance" (p.299). They observed that questionnaires, checklists, interviews, observations, scales, videotaping, time sampling, critical incidents all attempt to measure performance, however, these instruments and procedures measure "only the frequency of behavior rather that its potency or quality" (p. 299). Heck and Marcoulides (1992) supported this conclusion and added that instruments are often constructed in manner that makes it difficult to measure effectiveness.

Notwithstanding the weaknesses of the above procedures, many are used to collect data for the formal assessments of principals. Two recent additions have been made to this list: personal profiles and self-evaluations. Personal profiles allow the principal to "showcase" activities and results which may be added to data collected to assess performance.

Self-evaluation could be discussed as a type of evaluation or a means of collecting data for the purpose of formal performance appraisal. How it is perceived depends on the purpose for which it is intended. Begley and Associates (1993) recommended that self-evaluation be used as a professional development activity intended to improve performance. As such, it could be defined as a type of evaluation. However, many systems use self-evaluations as a means of collecting data for formal performance appraisals. For this reason, self-evaluation is included in this discussion.

Kremer-Hayon (1993) argued that the growing perception of teaching as a profession required a new approach to evaluation. As professionals, teachers are viewed as reflective practitioners and therefore capable of evaluating their own performance. The author observed that teachers are in the best position to determine if actions taken in the classroom or school are best suited to the particular situation. Further, current knowledge of child development and pedagogical practices equips teachers with the tools to assess their performance. Kremer-Hayon also noted that teacher self-evaluation is an ongoing activity, as compared to evaluations performed by outsiders and therefore can provide better feedback for the improvement of individual performance. While Kremer-Hayon focussed specifically on teachers, principals, as educators, can also be included.

In spite of the potential described by Kremer-Hayon (1993), other researchers have raised several concerns regarding the reliability of self-evaluations. While reviewing "Performance Review Analysis, and Improvement System for Educators," Koop and Common (1985) pointed out that self-ratings showed the lowest reliability coefficients of all ratings used. In addition, Railsback (1992) identified these pitfalls of ratings used in teacher self-evaluation programs:

> * Ratings (arbitrarily assigned values on a vaguely defined rating scale) can lead to a false sense of security.
> * Many of the criteria on the instrument may not be related to a quality program for all students.
> * The faculty may have given high ratings to create a positive image for the public.
> * Ratings don't point toward specific program improvements. Knowing the math program is a "4" doesn't tell the faculty what specific changes it should make for the program to be a "6." (p. 75)

Commenting on principal self-evaluations, Mullins, Ferguson, and Johnson (1988) stated that teachers were more inclined than principals to view general qualities of leadership and supervision as important competencies which should be possessed by principals. Moreover, they observed that while teachers believed that discrepancies existed between teacher evaluation of principals and principal self-evaluations, their input was valuable for improvement in principal effectiveness.

Although self-reflection and the establishment of goals form the core of a self-evaluation program, Valentine (1987) noted that principals frequently set overly simplistic goals. Therefore, he recommended that principals receive training in goal setting. Further, he cautioned that principals limit the number of goals set for a specific time period. For example, he believed that two or three building goals and two or three district goals were sufficient.

Problems With Evaluation

While the purpose of evaluation is to provide a basis for sound decision-making and increased effectiveness, practice does not necessarily match intent. Several circumstances have been cited to account for this failure. For example, Anderson (1991) noted that "current studies suggest that the evaluation methods used by many districts are not designed to enhance principal performance, but to satisfy accountability requirements that make principal evaluation mandatory" (p.77). In another vein, Ginsberg and Thompson (1992) remarked that finding appropriate means of evaluating principals is difficult because (a) the job is not amenable to simple characteristics or descriptions, (b) the nature of the principal's work varied markedly, and (c) varying expectations for principal behavior are held by different stakeholders. Similarly, Hart (1992) observed that principals often take actions which may be judged appropriate or inappropriate depending on the context of the situation.

Castetter (1996) alleged that weaknesses in traditional evaluation programs used over the past half-century were numerous. Criticisms gleaned from the literature by Castetter include:

- Appraisals are focused on an individual's personality rather than what he/she is expected to do or results he/she has achieved.
- Most administrators are not qualified to assess the personality of an individual.
- Appraisal tools lack validity.
- Raters display biases.
- Ratings and raters are subject to organizational influence.
- The appraisal system does not apply to all personnel.
- Results of appraisal are not utilized to assist individual development.
- Appraisees are fragmented into personality parts, which, when added together, do not reflect the whole person.

- Appraisal devices do not provide administrators with effective counselling tools.
- Most plans do not establish organizational expectations for individuals occupying specific positions.
- Appraisals are arbitrary or unjust when used for discipline, salary increases, promotion, or dismissal.
- Personnel do not understand criteria on which their performance is appraised.
- Performance is not evaluated in terms of its contribution to enterprise goals.
- Traditional appraisal procedures hamper effective communication between appraiser and appraisee. Heavy reliance by appraiser on feeling instead of fact generates defensive behavior on part of appraisee.
- Appraisal methodology does not provide an environment conducive to change in individual behavior.
- Appraisal methodology does not encourage satisfaction of higher-level needs of individuals, such as self-expression, creativity, and individualism.
- Performance appraisal models are not complementary to appraisal purposes." (p. 273)

From a survey of 800 principals in Ontario, Leithwood and Montgomery (1986) identified these additional problems with appraisal practices: (a) policies lacked detail regarding the process, (b) standards of performance were not always well-publicized, and (c) practices outlined in policies were not always followed in practice. Similarly, Kelsey (1992) found that summative evaluations of eight principals in British Columbia who had been assessed as ineffective made no reference to publicized district standards. Moreover, three of the eight reports demonstrated that evaluators already had a preconceived purpose in mind before engaging in the process. In a study of supervision and evaluation of principals in Alberta, Cammaert (1987) also noted that very little mention was made of standards of performance in evaluation practices in Alberta. In addition, he found that many systems did not have formal policies for the evaluation of principals, and in many existing policies principal evaluation was included as part of professional staff evaluation.

Further, Leithwood and Montgomery (1986) concluded that evaluation models often impose a restrictive view of how effective principals should act. While such models may standardize and facilitate the appraisal process, they do not accommodate creativity or situational differences. Several researchers (e.g., Hallinger & Murphy, 1987; Herriot & Firestone, 1984; Leithwood, 1986; and Luck & Manatt, 1984) have remarked on the significant differences in principal behavior between school levels. These differences may be attributed to situational factors such as school size, age of students, and programs offered. Therefore, it may be argued that evaluation should differ with the level of school. However, Leithwood and Montgomery (1986) have countered that despite the differences, principals share a significant body of knowledge which informs behavior which can be appraised. Nevertheless, differences which exist should serve to caution against the simplicity of a single approach to evaluation.

Additionally, Farmer (1979) inferred that the use of instruments borrowed from other jurisdictions can compromise the results of an evaluation. Instruments designed for a specific purpose in one jurisdiction may produce unreliable data if used in dissimilar circumstances.

Leithwood and Montgomery (1986) concluded that in spite of the importance of appropriate information for the improvement of personal and organizational effectiveness, insufficient attention was given to systematic and consistent evaluation. Evaluations were frequently conducted in a sporadic manner with little follow-up activity linking conclusions and recommended outcomes. Similarly, Cammaert (1987) noted that limitations on available time prevented supervisors from executing an effective program of evaluation. Moreover, Anderson (1991) stated that school systems which concentrate solely on the summative function of evaluation provide little opportunity for performance improvement. Therefore, discussion regarding how the process could be improved is warranted.

Recommendations for Evaluating Principals

Harrison and Peterson (1988) believed that "if principals are to improve performance, the stages of the evaluation process must be clear, specific, and understood by both the evaluator and the evaluatee" (p. 4). They further identified three themes or stages of an effective evaluation process: setting criteria, sampling performance, and communication of the results with expectations regarding growth. Other researchers (e.g., Castetter, 1996; Luck and Manatt,1984; and Stufflebeam, 1995) have agreed with these themes, although another important component has been suggested; the addition of performance standards to criteria identified for use in evaluations. While attention to a particular criterion is important, evaluators must also be concerned with the level of performance associated with that criterion. For example, Leithwood and Montgomery (1986) introduced descriptors identifying levels of effectiveness associated with administrative behavior: (a) administrators -- dedicated their energies toward caretaking activities to keep the school running smoothly; (b) humanitarian principals--were primarily concerned with keeping people happy; (c) program managers--devoted their attention to developing and maintaining programs in the school; and (d) systematic problem-solvers--concerned themselves with a broad range of issues which influence the effective functioning of the school.

In 1974, Provus conceptualized evaluation as a continuous interactive process (Figure 2.5). He posited that conclusions drawn from research and values and beliefs constructed from experience interact to inform the development of standards used to measure performance. Not evident in the diagram but integral to Provus's argument is the concept of discrepancy evaluation introduced in an earlier work (Provus, 1971). If no discrepancy was identified between stated standards of performance and observed behavior, the process could continue to the next stage. However, he argued that any discrepancy between standards and performance required consideration. Provus identified two possible sources for any discrepancy identified: unacceptable performance or a deficiency in the standards used to define acceptable performance. Therefore, the evaluation decision furnished feedback to either or both ends of the process. New information could be used to modify standards for measurement or individual performance. This model has significant

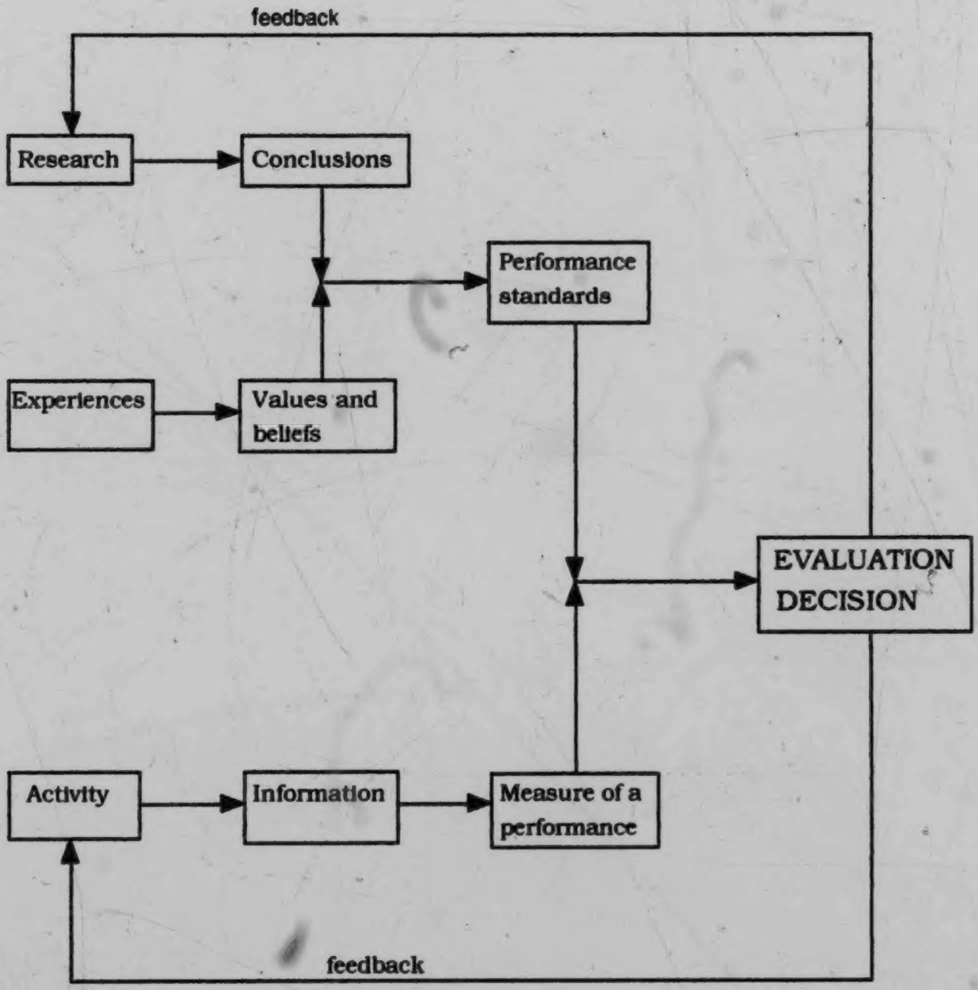
feedback
Research
Conclusions
Performance standards
Experiences
Values and beliefs
EVALUATION DECISION
Activity
Information
Measure of a performance
feedback

Figure 2.5 Evaluation Model (adapted from Provus, 1974).

potential in the linkage between evaluation and effectiveness.

Further, Anderson (1991) remarked that the development of a successful evaluation program, which satisfies the need for accountability and performance improvement, requires that school systems carefully plan the process. From a review of the literature, Anderson identified nine steps which school systems should use to develop effective evaluation practices: (a) identify the purposes for evaluation, (b) develop clear performance expectations, (c) involve principals in planning, (d) encourage goal-setting and self-reflection, (e) observe principals in action and often, (f) involve peers and teachers in providing feedback, (g) collect artifacts, (h) adopt a cyclical approach to evaluation, and (i) reward outstanding performance.

Identify the purposes for evaluation. Anderson (1991) stated that the first step facing school system officials and other members of the system is to identify the system's philosophy concerning evaluation and the purposes of the process. Although many reasons may exist for evaluating principals, Castetter (1996) and Anderson have argued that school systems should focus primarily on encouraging professional growth and ensuring that system staff are competent. Further, Anderson concluded that if an evaluation system is to be effective, everyone in the process must understand and agree to the purposes identified. Therefore, the development of written policy which articulates the system's values, philosophy of evaluation, purposes for evaluation, and practices which will be followed is advisable. Cammaert (1987) observed that systems which develop "written statements of purpose which are clear, precise, and complete are more likely to produce a sound basis for open communication and cooperative relationships than programs designed around ambiguous or unwritten purposes" (p. 81).

Develop clear performance expectations. Many researchers (e.g., Anderson, 1991; Castetter, 1996, Farmer, 1979, Leithwood and Montgomery, 1986; and Luck and Manatt, 1984) have noted that in addition to the identification of attitudes and behaviors which may be valued by the school system, definite expectations concerning the level of performance in each area must be established and communicated to system staff. These performance standards will serve as the basis for judging principal performance. Anderson maintained that superintendents must communicate performance standards to principals and "and ensure that principals understand the criteria that will be used to assess their performance" (p. 109).

Anderson (1991) remarked that systems that are developing or clarifying performance standards may wish to look at published lists of skills or proficiencies of school administrators. For example, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (1991) has a list of performance standards for elementary and middle schools.

Involve principals in planning. Anderson (1991) observed that research seems to indicate that principal involvement in planning enhances the degree of understanding and acceptance of the process, however, he cautioned that development or revision of evaluation practices should "be done carefully, slowly, and systematically" (p. 109). Further, Castetter (1996) pointed out that the quality of the evaluator and evaluatee relationship often influences the effectiveness of the evaluation. Principal involvement in the planning process improves this relationship.

Encourage goal setting and self-reflection. Anderson (1991) argued that school systems should encourage principals to establish individual and school goals. However, Anderson stated that if these goals are to be effective, they must be set within system goals.

In addition, Anderson (1991) suggested that school systems encourage their principals to reflect on their own performance and establish personal goals based on their conclusions. As mentioned earlier, Valentine (1987) observed that some principals do not establish realistic goals and may need some training or assistance to make the exercise worthwhile. Because Alberta Education (1995) has established expectations that schools develop three-year plans, central office administrators should monitor development of these plans to ensure their "achievability" and alignment with system goals.

Frequently observe principals in action. In a study of "effective" school systems in California, Hallinger and Murphy (1986) noted that the major contributing factor to the success of the system was the amount of time that central office personnel dedicated to direct contact with the school and school administrators. Through this contact superintendency staff was able to communicate and reinforce the system's vision and monitor the school's progress toward fulfilment of that vision. This finding is consistent with those of Bennis and Nanus (1985) who noted that regular contact between leaders and workers is crucial to the establishment and maintenance of a sense of vision. Further, Cammaert (1987) reported that principals in Alberta commented that supervision of principal performance would improve if supervisors were in their schools more often. Anderson (1991) confirmed this observation and maintained that research demonstrated "that evaluation and supervision of principals are improved when superintendents or central office supervisors devote ample time to working with and observing principals" (p. 110). He suggested that supervisory personnel schedule regular school visitations during the year for the purpose of observing and reporting on principal performance. Anderson also identified a number of activities which should be incorporated into the supervisory process:

- a pre conference to establish the reasons for the observation and the activities to be observed;
- a careful record of principals' words and behaviors for discussion and analysis during post observation conferences;
- a post conference soon after the observation to analyze and discuss data collected during the observation;
- feedback, both constructive and positive, on observed behavior; and
- assistance to principals in the development of plans for individual growth.

Involve peers and teachers in providing feedback. Anderson (1991) stated that although the principal's supervisor should assume the major responsibility for evaluation, schools systems should consider involving peers and teachers in the process. He observed that the principal's peers and teachers in the school are in a good position to make valuable and accurate assessments of the principal's performance, and confidential feedback would benefit the process. As mentioned earlier, Mullins et al. (1988) noted that while teachers believed that discrepancies existed between teacher evaluation of principals and principal self-evaluations, their input was valuable for improvement in principal effectiveness. While Anderson contended that teacher anonymity be guaranteed, union or association standards of professional behavior make this difficult in some educational environments. He also remarked that principals should receive assistance for interpreting teacher feedback.

Collect artifacts. In addition to evidence collected by direct observation, Anderson (1991) stated that supervisors should collect other information that provides evidence of the "effects of leadership" (p. 110). This may include (a) achievement scores, (b) evidence of curriculum development activity, (c) evidence of professional development for staff, (d) copies of correspondence to students, staff, and parents, (e) student and staff handbooks, (f) school policy, and (g) written evidence in support of the achievement of school goals. Anderson noted that the effectiveness of this information depended on early identification of what data would be collected and how it would be used.

Adopt a cyclical approach to evaluation. In order for supervisors to make meaningful decisions about employment status and organizational effectiveness, Anderson (1991) maintained that evaluation should be a continuous process. Further, he suggested a three-phase approach to all evaluations--planning, data collection, and using information to make decisions--which then leads into another cycle. Castetter (1996) also supported the continuous nature of evaluation in a five step approach to evaluation: (a) the appraisee-appraiser planning conference, (b) setting performance targets, (c) performance progress review, and (e) performance rediagnosis and recycle. Step five of

Castetter's model is the beginning of the next cycle of the process.

Reward outstanding performance. Finally, Anderson (1991) stated that exemplary performance in positions of leadership should be rewarded. Because merit programs are difficult to design and administer, school systems may explore other means of recognizing excellence. For example, recognition in public forums, letters of appreciation, or incentives in the form of more extensive professional development opportunities such as out-of-territory conferences could be used. However, Anderson concluded that

> the responsibility and motivation for professional improvement should not rest solely with supervisors. Individual principals must be committed to improving their skills. Growth ceases without commitment to continued improvement. Evaluation systems, therefore, should be designed so that evaluation is a mutual effort between principals and their superiors" (p. 111).

Figure 2.6 provides a conceptual framework for the evaluation of principal performance. Identified in the figure are (a) the various forces that influence the behavior of principals, (b) interactions between their behavior and that of other stakeholders in the school community which ultimately regulate principals' actions in the school, and (c) the perceptual screen through which behavior is evaluated in terms of personal and school effectiveness.

Conclusion

As noted earlier, current practices of selection and evaluation of principals could be improved. Many researchers have provided valuable suggestions for improving current practices. Whether the will exists to pursue more effective processes for the selection and evaluation of principals is unclear. The need is undeniable and, in a period of changing roles and circumstances, existing practices must be reviewed.

Need for Additional Research

What evidence exists that principals can become more effective? In 1986, Leithwood and Montgomery indicated that "studies of growth in principal effectiveness are virtually non-existent" (p. 224). However, a conclusion that growth cannot occur is unfounded. A large body of

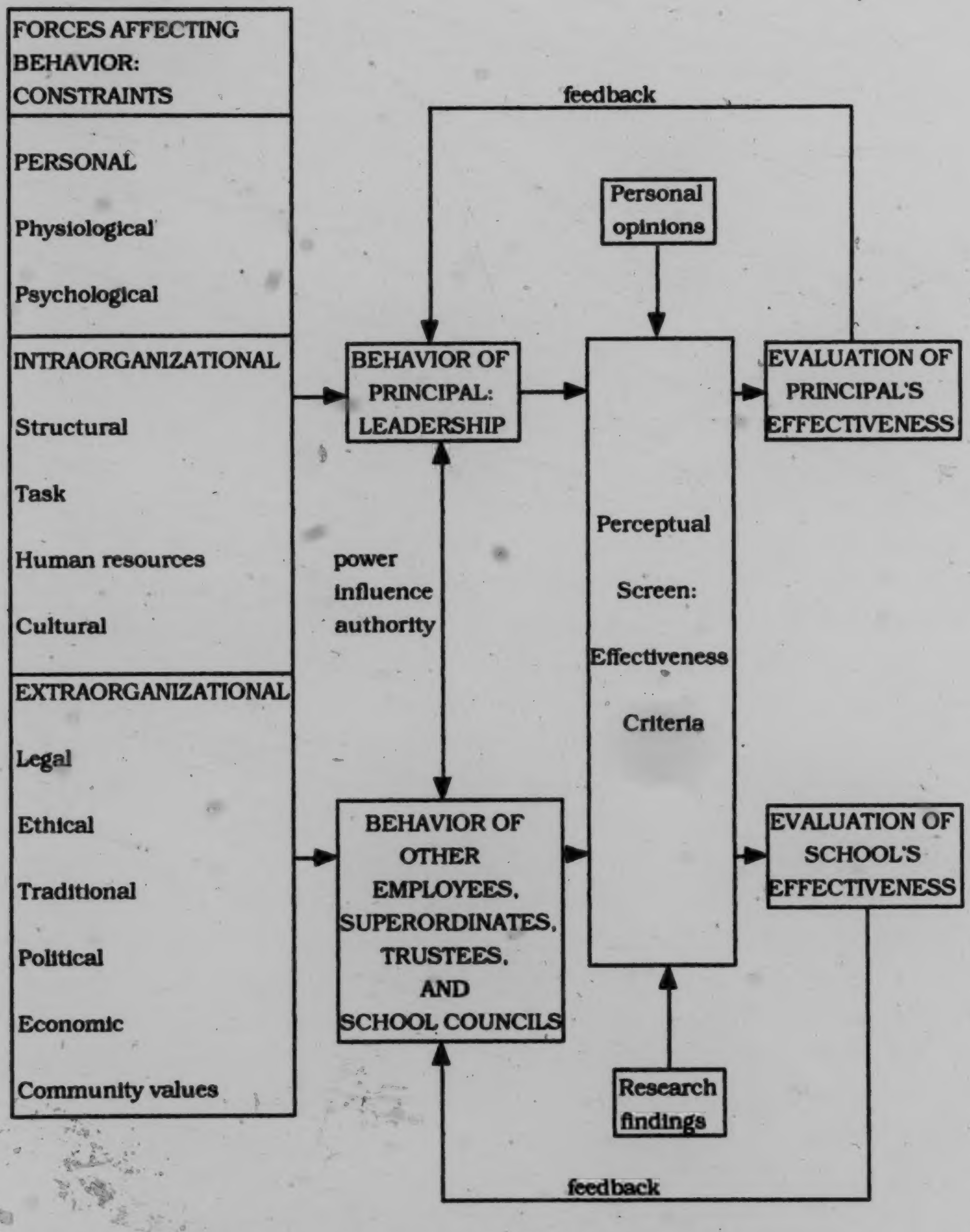
FORCES AFFECTING BEHAVIOR: CONSTRAINTS
PERSONAL
Physiological
Psychological
INTRAORGANIZATIONAL
Structural
Task
Human resources
Cultural
EXTRAORGANIZATIONAL
Legal
Ethical
Traditional
Political
Economic
Community values
feedback
Personal opinions
BEHAVIOR OF PRINCIPAL: LEADERSHIP
EVALUATION OF PRINCIPAL'S EFFECTIVENESS
power
influence
authority
Perceptual Screen: Effectiveness Criteria
BEHAVIOR OF OTHER EMPLOYEES, SUPERORDINATES, TRUSTEES, AND SCHOOL COUNCILS
EVALUATION OF SCHOOL'S EFFECTIVENESS
Research findings
feedback

Figure 2.6 Conceptual Framework for Evaluation of Principal's Effectiveness (Adapted from Genge, 1991).

success literature (e.g. Covey, 1989; DuFour & Eaker, 1987; Hickman & Silva, 1984; and Kouzes & Posner, 1987) rejects such an assumption. Similarly, Harris and Monk's (1992) contention that good selection practices provided one of the quickest ways to improve the effectiveness of an organization suggests that improvement is possible.

While several suggestions have been made regarding the process of selecting principals (e.g., Baltzell and Dentler, 1983; Morgan, 1988; Musella, 1983: and Musella and Lawton, 1986), further research is required. Several researchers (e.g., Harris and Monk, 1992; and Morgan, Further, Baltzell and Dentler (1983) have affirmed the apparent usefulness of internship programs, however, they expressed concern over the lack of research to confirm their value in the training of principals.

In relation to the evaluation process, Ginsberg and Berry (1990) have reported a general lack of credible research confirming successful practices. Several innovative practices (e.g., Leithwood and Montgomery, 1986; and Luck and Manatt, 1984) have been promoted as model formats for evaluation, however, no research exists to confirm their efficacy. In addition, a review of the literature on evaluation reveals a lack of research which would suggest that evaluation practices have any concrete impact on the effectiveness of the principal.

These conclusions support the view that more research is required in these important fields and provide justification for the study declared in this thesis.

Chapter 3

Research Design and Method

This chapter describes the research design, data sources, participants, instruments, pilot studies, data analysis, the timelines, validity and reliability, ethical considerations, delimitations, limitations, and procedures followed in the study.

Research Design

Data for this study, which was conducted within a general structural-functional framework, were collected by questionnaires, structured interviews, and document analyses. The study was conducted in three phases. In Phase One of the study, all superintendents of school systems in the province were asked to provide documents relative to the topic of the study. In Phase Two, superintendents and 100 principals were invited to complete a questionnaire. Phase Three involved interviews with a selected number of superintendents and principals who participated in Phase Two.

Documents

Initially, all 67 Alberta school systems (including Lloydminster) were requested to submit copies of their written policies and practices (hereinafter referred to as policy documents) regarding the selection and evaluation of school principals. The policy documents received were content-analyzed, and the data obtained were used to address issues raised by the specific research questions. In addition. questions arising from the analysis of the documents were incorporated into either the questionnaires or interview schedules for further exploration.

Questionnaires

Two different questionnaires were used, one for the principals and the other for superintendents or designates (hereinafter referred to as "superintendents"). The questions in the instrument were derived from the literature or the documents acquired in Phase One of the study and were framed specifically for the group targeted. The two questionnaires addressed similar issues to allow for comparison of the results obtained. Because Castetter (1996) had emphasized the use of standards associated with performance, questions involving judgments about criteria which used descriptive terms have been added to note the level of experience or degree of skill expected regarding those criteria.

Superintendents. Questionnaires were sent to superintendents of all school systems in Alberta with the exception of one superintendent who declined to participate in the study.

The survey method of data collection was chosen with an understanding of its inherent strengths and weaknesses. Kerlinger (1979) noted that this method is capable of collecting a large amount of information relative to the subject studied and is accurate within sampling error ranges. Kerlinger also noted that this method does not penetrate very deeply below the surface of the problem being studied.

Principals. An arbitrary decision was made at the beginning of the study to request 100 principals to complete a questionnaire. This number, based primarily on cost considerations, was deemed to be sufficient to obtain information which would reflect the views of some recently appointed principals. It was not meant to be a random sample allowing for the drawing of statistical inferences about the population of all recently appointed principals in Alberta.

In Phase One, superintendents were asked to identify principals with two, three, or four years of experience in the principalship in their systems. This criterion was used on the assumption that these principals would still remember the selection process but would have been employed long enough to have been evaluated. From 195 principals identified, 100 were invited to complete the questionnaire. A detailed description of procedures used to select this sample appears in Chapter 4. Three principals who completed and returned the questionnaire were disqualified because they did not meet the criteria established. Information from their questionnaires was not included in the study.

Interviews

Phase Three of the survey involved a structured interview with five principals and five superintendents identified after the review of the questionnaire data. This was a purposive sample designed to include public and separate systems, large and small systems, and urban and rural systems. The single interview was conducted with each participant to clarify and amplify responses received on the questionnaire. A second contact with each individual was initiated to verify the accuracy of the written transcripts of the initial interview.

Questions selected for the interview were derived from the literature and from responses to the questionnaires. The majority of the interview questions were open-ended. Two sets of questions were developed to collect specific data. Data collected from responses to these questions enhanced the richness of the questionnaire replies. Each interview was recorded and transcribed. This enabled the researcher to concentrate on the topic being discussed and views being expressed. Immediately after each interview, the researcher attempted to clarify any ambiguous points and pursued related issues raised during the interview.

Each participant's response was analyzed across all questions and compared to others in the same population. Next, the response of each respondent was compared to the portrait derived from the review of the documentation and analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaires from the home jurisdiction. Finally, all the data were examined collectively to determine common themes evident across the sample.

Pilot Studies

Pilot testing of the questionnaire was conducted with two superintendents and two principals representing four different school systems. Each participant in the pilot study was asked to complete the respective questionnaires, to note the time required to complete them, and to comment on their structure. Also, one principal and one superintendent were interviewed using the initial interview schedule designed for the interview phase of the study. They were sufficiently familiar with the subject areas to comment on face validity and the appropriateness of the content. No individual participated in more than one pilot study, and those in the pilot study were not included in the main study.

After administration of the pilot questionnaire, each superintendent and principal was debriefed regarding the clarity, usefulness, practicality, relevance, and accuracy of the instrument. Similarly, individuals involved in the interview pilot study were debriefed for the same information. Comments received from those involved in the pilot studies were used to revise the questionnaires and interview schedules. While many of the changes were minor in nature, some substantive issues were raised. In addition, pilot studies assisted the researcher to identify issues regarding the selection and evaluation of principals in Alberta which had not been identified in the literature. Participant feedback on the time required to complete the questionnaire or interview also assisted in establishing expectations regarding the requested time commitment for those who were invited to participate in either Phase Two or Phase Three of the study.

Data Analysis

The choice of the three instruments to collect data was an obvious attempt to enhance the richness and depth of the data collected. Data from three different sources could be compared to address the relationship of policy content, intent and implementation, in addition to the perceptions of individuals regarding the legitimacy, validity, and reliability of the processes of selection and evaluation.

Data collected from the questionnaires and the policy documents were analyzed to determine the frequency of responses and some means for all respondents classified as school systems, superintendents, or principals. In addition, some data from the documents and the questionnaires as well as the data from the interviews were content analyzed to provide explanations, corroboration, and expansion of findings in the documents and questionnaires.

The extensive amount of data required that cross-tabulations be restricted to principals cf. superintendents. Other cross-tabulations could be conducted involving groups such as public/separate systems, urban/rural systems, and very large/medium/small systems.

Timeline

In July 1996, a letter (Appendix B) was sent to all 67 superintendents inviting them to participate in the study. Each superintendent was asked to send a copy of current system policies on the selection and evaluation of principals. In the absence of written policy, the superintendent was encouraged to provide a written description of the practices used in that system. In addition, each was asked to provide the names of principals with two, three, or four years of experience in their system.

Follow-up letters (Appendix B) were sent in September 1996 to those superintendents who did not respond to the first letter. At the end of September 1996 a few superintendents who had not yet responded were contacted by telephone.

In November 1996, a letter (Appendix B) and a copy of the superintendent survey questionnaire (Appendix A) was sent to each superintendent participating in the study. A stamped, self-addressed envelope was provided to facilitate the return of completed questionnaires. Superintendents were asked to respond by December 1996. A follow-up letter (Appendix B) was sent in January 1997 to those superintendents who had not returned completed questionnaires. A few superintendents were also contacted by telephone at the end of January 1997.

A letter (Appendix B) was sent in December 1996 to each principal in the sample with a copy of the principal questionnaire (Appendix A). A stamped, self-addressed envelope was also included to facilitate the return of completed questionnaires. Principals were asked to return the completed questionnaires by January 15, 1997. On January 17, 1997, a follow-up letter was sent to principals who had not returned the questionnaire.

In April 1997, superintendents and principals chosen to participate in Phase Three of the study were contacted by telephone to (a) invite them to participate, and (b) establish a time for the interview. Prior to each interview, a memo (Appendix B) and a copy of the interview schedule (Appendix A) were faxed to each participant. Most interviews were conducted between April 15 and April 30, 1997. Busy schedules of two superintendents delayed completion of the interviews until early June 1997. After each interview, participant responses were transcribed and faxed to the individual interviewed. The researcher contacted each principal and central office administrator involved to confirm the accuracy of the transcribed comments. Any changes suggested by the interviewees were made on the transcriptions. These were generally quite minor.

Validity

An overview of actions that were taken to ensure the internal and external validity is outlined in this section.

Internal Validity

Rudestam and Newton (1992) pointed out that "validity indicates that a measure in fact measures what it purports to measure" (p. 67). Similarly, Borg and Gall (1989) have remarked that the validity of an instrument depends on the degree to which it measures what it professes to measure. Further, Borg and Gall discussed the importance of "content" validity. Fox (1969) argued that content validity is a key factor in the development of data-collection instruments. Borg and Gall contended that establishing content validity requires that each question used must be related to the topic under study. While they noted that it was not necessary to cover all aspects of the topic, questions should cover a representative sample of aspects of the topic under investigation.

Existing instruments and the literature were reviewed to ensure that critical aspects regarding the selection and evaluation of principals were included. One of the primary instruments reviewed was that used in Musella and Lawton's (1986) survey of principals in Ontario. Questions were related to the specific questions outlined in Chapter 1. In addition, the pilot study provided a check on the clarity and scope of the questions used in both the survey questionnaire and the interview schedule.

External Validity

Guba and Lincoln (1982) maintained that a strictly random sample is a key requirement for true generalizability. However, they also noted that a degree of generalizability is feasible without using such a rigorous sample.

Sampling for the study varied. In Phase One, all 67 school systems in the province were invited to participate and 66 accepted. In addition, all of them were asked to complete a survey questionnaire during Phase Two of the study. Questionnaires were completed and returned by 63 superintendents. Questionnaires were also completed by 65 principals out of a non-random sample of 100 eligible principals.

A purposive sample was chosen for Phase Three. While these findings may not be generalizable, they added to the validity of findings from the other two phases of the study.

Reliability

The credibility of findings is vital to the value of any research. Therefore, the researcher must give attention to the reliability of the instruments used. Zeller (1988) defined reliability as the "extent to which a measurement procedure consistently yields the same result on repeated observations" (p. 323). However, any study of human behavior is subject to limitations of replicability. Cziko (1989) pointed out that the level of predictability of human behavior is central to the issue of replicability. Moreover, Oberle (1991) noted that the degree to which human behavior can be determined is a primary focus of debate over research models.

While reliability is an important requirement of quantitative research, it was somewhat less relevant for this study because no testing was conducted. The descriptive nature of this study virtually excludes the possibility of replicability. However, Mouly (1978) maintained that sufficient reliability could be established through dependence on earlier research, use of a pilot study, and a review by experts. Many of the ideas used to frame the instruments were obtained from major studies conducted by Baltzell and Dentler (1983), Morgan, Hall and Mackay

(1983), Musella (1983), and Musella and Lawton (1986). In addition, the instruments were critiqued by the researcher's supervisory committee and exposed to experienced field personnel during the pilot study.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in compliance with the ethical guidelines of the University of Alberta requirements. Prior to beginning the research a proposal was submitted to the Ethics Review Committee of the Department of Education Policy Studies for review. The researcher was careful to avoid any ethical problems in this study. Involvement at any of the three levels was voluntary. Participants were advised that they could withdraw from the study at any time. The interests and protection of all participants was safeguarded at all times, subsequently, no mental or physical harm was anticipated. Moreover, the names of all participants were confidential and the information they provided was treated discreetly. In addition, tape-recorded interviews were erased upon completion of the study.

Transcripts of the interviews were sent to all 10 interviewees for their approval. Only minor editorial changes were deemed by them to be necessary.

Delimitations

The following delimitations apply to this study:

1. While all jurisdictions were requested to submit written policies and a high proportion of central office administrators were involved, the study was delimited to obtaining information from a sample of principals with two, three, or four years experience in their current position. These principals represented 31 school systems in Alberta.

2. Interviews were delimited to purposive samples of superintendents and principals who had completed the questionnaire.

3. Data collection was delimited to variables identified in the literature that were considered to be salient to this study.

Limitations

The following limitations applied to this study:

1. Data collected from documents were limited to those which

could be supplied by school systems. Many did not have new written policies governing the selection and evaluation of principals available at the time of the survey.

2. Data collected through the survey questionnaire were limited by the numbers of individuals who chose respond.

3. The validity of collected data was limited by the clarity and scope of the questions asked and the degree to which responses from individuals and data from documents represent the reality of practices in the province.

Summary

Policies or written practices regarding the selection and evaluation of principals were requested from all school systems in Alberta. All 66 superintendents and 100 principals were asked to complete questionnaires regarding selection and evaluation practices. Interviews were conducted with five superintendents and five principals that were chosen from those that completed the questionnaires. Data from the interviews were used to provide illustrative and confirmatory data to complement the questionnaire and document data. Descriptive analysis procedures were applied with the quantitative data from the questionnaires and the documents. Content analysis techniques were used with the open-ended and interview data.

Chapter 4

Description of the Participants

Introduction

This chapter describes (a) the characteristics of school systems in Alberta, (b) the characteristics of groups of participants, and (c) the process used to determine participants in the study. School system characteristics and some data on characteristics of participants were identified from information obtained from Alberta Education documents. Additional information about principals was gathered from Part 3 of the Principals' Questionnaire.

School Systems

At the beginning of the study, in July 1996, there were 66 school systems in Alberta: 41 public, 22 separate, and 3 Francophone systems . . As noted in Chapter 1, these 66 systems resulted from the amalgamation a number of smaller systems. Of the 141 systems which existed prior to September 1994, only 18 were not affected by the amalgamation--13 public systems and 5 separate systems. The goal of the government was to reduce the total number of school systems in the province to 60, however, 11 separate school systems filed an injunction to reverse amalgamations proposed by the Minister. Of these 11 systems, 8 were already regional units consisting of at least 2 smaller systems. Other regional systems consisted of two to five smaller systems which had operated independently prior to the amalgamation. The three Francophone systems were new entities formed in response to a challenge to Section 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Of the 66 systems in the province, 1 system declined the invitation to be part of the study. As mentioned in Chapter 3, one of two school systems serving the border community of Lloydminster was included. Therefore, 42 public, 21 separate, and 3 Francophone school systems participated in the study. A frequency distribution of the size of school systems based on the number of students served appears in Table 4.1. Of the 66 systems, 14 exclusively or predominately served urban communities.

Table 4.1

Frequency Distributions of Size of School Systems Participating in the Study (N= 66)

Number of students	Type of system		
	Public (N= 42)	Separate (N= 21)	Francophone (N= 3)
500 and fewer	--	--	2
501 - 1,000	--	4	1
1,001 - 2,000	1	7	--
2,001 - 4,000	10	6	--
4,001 - 6,000	15	1	--
6,001 - 8,000	7	1	--
8,001 - 10,000	4	--	--
10,001 - 15,000	2	--	--
15,001 - 20,000	1	--	--
20,001 - 50,000	--	2	--
Over 50,000	2	--	--

Superintendents

Superintendents from all 66 school systems identified in Table 4.1 were asked to provide copies of policies or written practices regarding the selection and evaluation of principals which were used in their systems. Of these 66 superintendents, 48 provided documentation from their systems: 25 systems had written policies or practices relating to both selection and evaluation; 7 had policies or practices relating to selection only; and 16 had policies or practices relating to evaluation only. The remaining 18 systems noted that they were either revising existing policies and practices or developing new ones. Incidental information about practices used for either selection or evaluation was provided by 7 of the 18 systems.

Of the 25 systems which submitted statements of policies or practices for both selection and evaluation, 13 were public, 11 were separate, and 1 was Francophone. Four public and three separate systems supplied only selection policies or practices. Of the 16 systems that furnished policies or practices for evaluation, 13 were public and 3 were separate.

All 66 superintendents--58 male and 8 female--were also invited to complete the survey questionnaire. Of these 66 superintendents, 63--56 male and 7 female--completed and returned the questionnaire: 42 public, 19 separate, and 2 Francophone. The three superintendents that did not respond were from school systems which served fewer than 2,000 students.

Principals

A random, stratified sample of principals would have been more representative of all principals in the province, but it would not have provided the unique perspective required by the study. The emphasis on both the selection and evaluation of principals required the participation of individuals who could offer recent knowledge of both areas.

Therefore, superintendents submitted the names of principals with two, three, or four years experience as a principal in their system. These principals were considered for two reasons: (a) their selection to the position was recent enough for them to recall the process, and (b) they would have been in the current position long enough to have been evaluated.

Superintendents from 33 systems (24 public and 9 separate) submitted the names of 195 principals (139 public and 56 separate). One other superintendent noted that the system had two eligible principals, but he did not provide any names. Of the 139 public principals, 86 were from 20 systems with student populations of 2,000 to 10,000, 11 were from 2 systems with 10,001 to 20,000 students each, and 42 were from 2 systems with more than 50,000 students each. Of the 56 separate principals, 11 were from six systems with student populations of less than 4,000 students, one was from one system with 6,000 to 8,000 students, and 44 were from two systems with 30,000 to 50,000 students each.

Seven distinct types of schools were represented by eligible principals: (a) elementary (grades K-6 or 1-6)--103 principals, (b) elementary/junior high (grades K-9 or 1-9)--42 principals, (c) grade 1-12--21 principals, (d) junior high (grades 7-9)--11 principals, (e) senior high (grades 10-12)--8 principals, (f) junior/senior high (grades 7-12)--5 principals, and (g) middle (some or all of grades 5-9)--5 principals. The data indicate that between 1992 and 1994 a higher proportion of male principals were appointed. At only the elementary level was the number of female appointments approximately equal to the number of male appointments. Of the 195 principals appointed during this time period, 39% were female. Females were appointed to 51% of the elementary positions, 36% of junior high positions, 25% of senior high positions, 26% of elementary/junior high positions, 20% of junior/senior high positions, 19% of grade 1 - 12 positions, and 20% of middle school principalships.

Choosing the Sample

A purposive sample was chosen considering four factors: (a) the relative number of principals in each type of school, (b) numbers of students served by large urban systems, (c) the gender of eligible principals, and (d) the size of school as determined by the number of teachers employed. In each case, an attempt was made to ensure that the sample reflected proportional numbers of principals who were part of the eligible group nominated by superintendents. However, the actual distribution of principals by type of school, employment with large urban systems, sex, and size of school did not permit a strictly proportionate sample.

Because there were only 29 eligible principals in junior high, senior high, junior/senior high, and middle schools, all of these were included in the sample. The four factors mentioned above were employed in determining a sample of 71 principals from the 166 employed in the remaining three school types which resulted in the following distribution: 41 elementary school principals, 20 elementary/junior high, and 10 from grade 1-12 schools.

The numbers of principals in the sample attempted to reflect the proportion of students served by the four large urban systems and the relative proportion of students educated by public and separate systems. Of 41 elementary principals in the sample, 20 were chosen from these systems (12 public and 8 separate). Similarly, of the 20 elementary/junior high principals, 10 were selected from the four large urban systems (4 public and 6 separate). While 5 of the 10 principals from grade 1-12 schools were to be chosen from the four urban systems, only one eligible principal was employed in these systems. Table 4.2 summarizes the distribution of principals in the sample by school size, school type, and gender of the principal.

Schools represented by eligible principals were divided into three categories: (a) small schools--1 to 10 teachers, (b) medium size schools--11 to 20 teachers, and (c) large schools--more than 20 teachers. Eligible principals were employed in 61 small schools, 92 medium size schools, and 42 large schools. Of the 71 principals chosen from these three school types, 24 were from small schools, 32 were from medium size schools, and 15 were from large schools.

While 33 superintendents nominated principals, the sample

Table 4.2

Frequency Distributions of Principals in the Sample by School Type, School Size, and Gender

Number of teachers in the school		Type of School							
		Elem.	Jr. High	Sr. High	Elem./ Jr. High	Jr./Sr. High	G.1 - 12	Middle	Total
1-10 (small)	M	6	1	0	3	2	4	0	16
	F	9	0	0	2	0	0	0	11
11-20 (medium)	M	8	3	1	5	1	3	0	21
	F	10	2	1	4	1	2	0	20
over 20 (large)	M	4	3	5	6	1	1	4	24
	F	4	2	1	0	0	0	1	8
	M	18	7	6	14	4	8	4	61
TOTAL		**41**	**11**	**8**	**20**	**5**	**10**	**5**	**100**
	F	23	4	2	6	1	2	1	39

included principals from only 31 of these systems (23 public and 8 separate). Principals from the other two systems were not included because they were from school types where representation from systems exceeded the available number of openings in the sample.

Respondents

Of 100 questionnaires sent to principals in the sample, 65 were completed and returned. Three of these were not included in the analysis of the data because each principal's experience in their current position exceeded the specified maximum of four years allowed for the study. Principals who responded to the questionnaire were from 27 (19 public and 8 separate) of the 31 systems represented by principals who received questionnaires. Two of these 27 systems (both public) lost representation because a principal's response was disqualified.

Table 4.3 displays a summary of the information provided by principals about the size of their school. While 80% of principals were responsible for schools with 500 or fewer students, 55% of these were from schools with a maximum of 300 students. Only one principal was responsible for a school with more than 1000 students.

Of the 62 principals, 73% had been in their current positions for three or fewer years. Only two principals were close to the maximum experience allowed for participation in the study. As mentioned earlier, only principals with two, three, or four years of experience in the principalship with their current employer were eligible. However, a failure of the researcher to anticipate moves within the system during these three years, the time lapse between the superintendent nominations and the date on which the questionnaires were actually sent, and differing interpretations of the wording of the question account for the reported experience of one to five years.

Tables 4.4 and 4.5 summarize information concerning (a) each respondent's total experience as a principal in any system, and (b) the position each held prior to being hired to their current position. The majority of principals in the study had five or fewer years of experience. The mean number of years of experience as a principal for all

Table 4.3

Frequency Distributions of Principals According to the Size of School, as Reported by Principals
(N= 59)

Number of students	f	%f
0 - 100	2	3
101-200	13	22
210-300	11	19
301-400	13	22
401-500	8	14
501-1000	11	19
1001-1500	0	0
1501-2000	1	2

Notes: 1. In this table and succeeding tables, percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number. This may result in total percentages not adding to 100%.

2. No response was received from three principals.

Table 4.4

Frequency Distributions of Principals by Total Experience as a School Principal, as Reported by Principals
(N= 59)

Years of experience	f	%f
2 to 5 years	52	88
6 to 10 years	6	10
11 to 15 years	1	2

Note: No response was received from three principals.

Table 4.5

Frequency Distributions of Positions Held by Principals at the Time of Their Appointment to the Principalship, as Reported by Principals
(N= 59)

Position	f	%f
Vice-principal	31	53
Principal	13	22
Teacher	3	5
System curriculum coordinator	3	5
Alberta Education manager	3	5
Program specialist	2	3
Other	4	7

Notes: 1. "Other" included one mention each for (a) director of a school system, (b) supervisor of professional development, (c) executive to the chief superintendent, and (d) would not specify.

2. No response was received from three principals.

respondents in the study was 4.17. Of the 62 principals, 42 were school administrators at the time of their appointment. Other principals may have had school administrative experience, but the data available did not support this conclusion. Three principals moved directly from teaching into administration. One of these, however, noted that an individual specifically chosen by the aspiring administrator had provided mentoring.

Interviews

Five superintendents and five principals were interviewed in Phase Three of the study.

Superintendents

Although consideration of three factors influenced the choice of superintendents, the final selection is best described as a sample of convenience. These factors included (a) numbers of students served by large urban systems, (b) the existence of public and separate systems, and (c) the large number of smaller school systems. Of the five superintendents chosen, two were from large urban systems, one from a separate system, and two from systems with fewer that 8000 students.

Principals

While the principal sample was essentially a sample of convenience, some aspects of purposive sampling were incorporated. The principal group included representation from the large city systems, principals from both separate and public schools, male and female principals, and principals from a range school sizes. The sample also included principals from five different types of schools: (a) elementary, (b) junior high, (c) junior-senior high, (d) elementary through senior high, and (e) middle schools. Although certain criteria determined the population from which principals were chosen, the actual choice of individuals in within each area was influenced by convenience of access.

Summary

Superintendents from all but one system in Alberta and one superintendent from the border community of Lloydminster provided either copies of policies on selection and evaluation of principals or information regarding the status of policies in their systems. In addition, 63 of 66 superintendents completed a questionnaire relating to the selection and evaluation of principals.

Of 100 recently appointed principals chosen from 195 identified by superintendents, 65 returned completed questionnaires covering the same issues. Three of these were disqualified because information about their experience in the questionnaire revealed their ineligibility. Therefore, data from 62 of 97 principal questionnaires was analyzed.

In addition, information provided by five superintendents and five principals in interviews was used to clarify and enhance findings from both the documents supplied and responses from the questionnaires.

Chapter 5

Practices Used in the Selection of Principals

Introduction

The data obtained during the policy analysis, questionnaire, and interview phases of this study were analyzed according to four distinctive foci of investigation: (a) processes used in selecting school principals, (b) criteria used in selecting principals, (c) processes used in evaluating school principals, and (d) criteria used in evaluating principals. These four foci are developed individually in Chapters 5 through 8.

This chapter addresses Specific Research Question 1 which deals with (a) the current selection policies and practices in Alberta, (b) the effects of contextual variables on these policies and practices, (c) the extent to which superintendents and principals are satisfied with selection policies and practices, and (d) the extent to which recommendations in the literature are reflected in these policies and practices.

Specific Research Question 1.a

What policies and practices relating to the selection of principals are currently used in Alberta?

Employment equity was not addressed as a separate issue in any policy documents and therefore was not pursued in the questionnaires or interviews. Most policies emphasized desired skills and characteristics and indicated that all qualified individuals would be considered. In the questionnaire responses, only one principal noted that more attention should be given to recruiting and hiring female principals.

Dissemination of Information About Policies (SQ 1; PQ 1)

As noted earlier, 32 school systems submitted copies of policies and/or practices which were either currently in use or very close to adoption. Information about the extent to which policies and practices concerning the selection of principals were communicated throughout school systems is provided in Table 5.1.

The majority of respondents in both groups--superintendents and principals--indicated that selection policies and practices were

Table 5.1

Frequency Distributions of Extent to Which Written Policies Concerning the Selection of Principals Were Communicated Within School Systems, as Reported by Superintendents and Principals (SQ 1; PQ 1)

Degree	Superintendents (N= 61)		Principals (N= 60)	
	f	%f	f	%f
Extensively	37	61	34	57
Selectively	17	28	19	32
Not at all	7	11	7	12

Notes: 1. No response was received from two superintendents and one principal. Also, one principal was undecided.

2. In this table and succeeding tables, percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number. This may result in total percentages not adding to 100%.

extensively communicated within their school systems. Only seven superintendents and seven principals noted that no attempt was made to communicate the policies and practices. No superintendent who reported "no communication" had principals who received the questionnaire.

The seven principals reporting "no communication" represented fiveschool systems. In each system where principals reported no communication, the superintendent had indicated extensive communication. In three of the five systems, more than one principal was in the sample, but in only one system were principals unanimous in their opinions concerning no communication of policy information. One-third to one-half of the principals in the other two systems agreed with their superintendent's assertion of extensive communication.

Two superintendents and one principal noted that policies had either yet to be developed or were in the process of revision. Another principal noted that while policies were extensively communicated throughout the system, information about current practices was not communicated at all.

Technology Used in Selection

Discussion of selection technologies (Castetter, 1996, p. 133) is divided into four sections (a) components identified in documents, (b) components identified in the questionnaire, (c) individuals involved in selection, and (d) sources of data used in evaluating prospective candidates.

Components identified in the documents. A summary of components used in the selection of principals which were outlined in the policy documents appears in Table 5.2.

Details regarding recruiting processes varied substantially. Documents revealed that 21 of 32 systems advertised both internally and externally. Five of those 21 systems noted that they might consider internal transfers before advertising externally. Three systems clearly stipulated that competitions for vacancies were "open," while two noted that "all things being equal" the internal candidate would receive

Table 5.2

Frequency Distributions of Components Mentioned in Policy Documents

(N= 32)

Component	f	%f
Recruitment	32	100
Individuals involved in the selection decision	32	100
Use of selection committees	29	91
Short-listing candidates	27	84
Interviewing candidates	25	78
Reference checks	10	31
Action accompanying the vacancy announcement	10	31
Job analysis	8	25
Contact with candidates	6	19
Principal profile	6	19
Training selectors	3	10
Security checks	2	6
Written assignment	1	3

Note: Three policies also included the articulation of principles or statements of philosophy which provided a framework for the selection process.

preferential consideration. Five other systems stipulated that competition for vacancies was restricted to internal candidates. Four of these systems required participation in local training programs to qualify for consideration. One superintendent remarked that historically appointments were made from the candidate pool, but the system was considering a requirement that candidates apply in an open, internal competition. In the remaining six systems, decisions regarding recruiting were left to the discretion of the hiring committee.

Statements in the policy documents identified two general categories of individuals involved in the selection decision: (a) the board of trustees and (b) superintendency staff. Twenty-three policy documents indicated that the board was responsible for making the selection decision. In most cases, approval was based on recommendations from the superintendent directly, or the superintendent speaking on behalf of a selection committee, or from a selection committee. This practice of basing decisions on recommendations was reported in 15 documents. Six policy documents noted that recommendations from the superintendent or selection committee were to be supplemented with summary information on all candidates or other information required by the board. One system indicated that the board and superintendent made a joint decision based on a committee's recommendation, but pointed out that the superintendent had 51% of the vote in the final decision.

Although most of the policy documents indicated that selection committees were used, the composition of these committees varied with at least 13 types of committees being described in the documents. Stakeholders identified in policies or selection committees included (a) central office administrators--22 mentions, (b) trustees--13 mentions, (c) principals--11 mentions, (d) teachers--5 mentions, and (e) school advisory committees--4 mentions. In some cases parents, teachers, and trustees were identified as advisors to the selection committee.

Central office personnel were most frequently named as being responsible for short-listing candidates in the selection process.

However, eight systems assigned this task to the selection committee. One system included short-listing as a component, although it did not indicate who was responsible. Only one system noted that criteria were established for screening candidates, but these criteria were not identified.

Selection committees were named in 80% of the policy documents as having responsibility for interviewing candidates for the principalship. While the composition of these committees varied, they generally included representatives of stakeholder groups. Other mentions included (a) assessment teams--two mentions, and (b) the board of trustees--one mention. Two systems indicated that this component was used in the process but did not assign responsibility. The assessment teams identified were part of a process used to select candidates for training programs. They were also responsible for monitoring candidate's progress. Individuals graduating from these programs could be considered for administrative vacancies, however no guarantee of employment as an administrator was implied by successful completion of the program.

Although reference checks were included by 10 school systems, little detail was provided. Four systems indicated that the superintendent or designate was responsible for conducting reference checks. One system noted that reference checks should be restricted to "promising candidates." Three other systems reported this component but provided no detail.

Actions accompanying the vacancy announcement varied with the system reporting. Four systems indicated that the position was advertised and one of these noted that any action taken was governed by the budget. Policy documents from one system noted that the board could decide not to fill the position. An option in another system was to effect an internal transfer before advertising the position. Another noted that, depending on the time of year, a temporary appointment might be the best course to follow.

Three systems developed a job description which is similar to a job analysis as a means of identifying the unique characteristics of the job. One of these remarked that job descriptions would vary from school to school in recognition of the differences in needs and expectations in school communities. In another system, the school principal was responsible for developing and updating a school profile. This profile provided a current standard against which to measure potential candidates. Further, three systems indicated that a review of system or school objectives provided guidance in selecting a prospective principal.

Of those systems indicating some degree of contact with candidates, only one stated that it advised all candidates of the receipt of their applications. Most systems advised candidates of the status of their application. One school system noted that it advised all candidates of the identity of the successful candidate.

Five of the six systems which provided policy documents developed a profile of the candidate they wish to select. Principals in the other system have been given the responsibility for this task.

Very little detail was provided about training for individuals involved in the selection process. One system noted that established criteria were discussed with individuals involved to enhance common understanding of the process. The other two systems used central office staff in the selection process. No mention was made of the training provided, although it is inferred that these individuals have some specialized preparation.

Only two systems made any reference to security checks, and no details were provided regarding the process used or the information desired. In addition, only one system mentioned the use of a "written assignment" as part of the process of selection.

Components identified in the questionnaire (SQ 3). A summary of superintendents' responses regarding the use of components selected from the documents is provided in Table 5.3. More than 80% of superintendents responding to the questionnaire included (a) collecting relevant data, (b) checking on the accuracy of data collected, (c) short-listing candidates, and (d) interviewing candidates. However, very few

Table 5.3

Frequency Distributions of Inclusion of Designated Components in the Selection Process, as Identified by Superintendents (SQ. 3)
(N= 61)

Component	f	%f
Short-listing candidates	61	100
Interviewing candidates	60	98
Collecting relevant data (e.g., resume, references)	56	92
Checking accuracy of data received	50	82
Conducting simulated exercises	10	16
Other:		
Profiles	4	7
Job shadowing	2	3
Gallup Principal Perceiver instrument	1	2
Appointment	1	2
Observation at a social gathering	1	2

Notes: 1. Reference checks and checks with priests also were mentioned as "other." However, they relate to the process of checking the accuracy of information received.

2. Included in "profiles" were school and principal profiles with one mention each.

3. No response was received from 2 superintendents.

systems used any form of simulated exercise as part of the selection process. One superintendent indicated that the system had incorporated "writing" and an "in-basket exercise" as part of the process, but no further details were provided.

In addition to those listed in the questionnaire, superintendents identified four other components. These included (a) the use of principal and school profiles to enhance "fit," (b) observation of prospective candidates in a social context, (c) visiting candidates in their current position, and (d) the use of the "Gallup Principal Perceiver."

Individuals involved in the process (SQ 3). Findings for part two of Q. 3 from the superintendent questionnaire are summarized in Table 5.4. Responses revealed a wide range of individuals involved in (a) short-listing candidates, (b) interviewing candidates, and (c) making the selection decision.

Understandably, central office administrators were highly involved in all steps of the selection process. Trustees were the next most frequently involved. However, in most systems, central office administrators had the primary responsibility for short-listing candidates. The research identified an 80% difference in the level of administrator involvement and trustee involvement. At least eight different types of committees were involved in short-listing candidates. Central office administrators were directly named as participants in seven of these types of committees. However, central office administrators were identified by 69% of the respondents as conducting this aspect of the selection process without input from other stakeholders. In fact, 47% of the respondents indicated that a single administrator handled short-listing of candidates. School council members participated in four of these types of committees, while trustees, principals, and school staff were involved in three.

The difference between administrator and other group involvement in interviewing the successful candidate was much less than for short-listing. Committees consisting of 15 combinations of stakeholders were involved in interviewing candidates. Central office administrators were

Table 5.4
Frequency Distributions of Individuals Involved in Various Stages of the Selection Process, as Identified by Superintendents (SQ.3)

Individuals involved	Process					
	Short-listing (N= 49)		Interviews (N= 48)		Selection (N= 47)	
	f	%f	f	%f	f	%f
Administrators	46	94	41	85	43	91
Trustees	7	14	27	56	25	53
School staff	6	12	16	33	5	11
School councils	8	16	16	33	6	13
Principals	3	6	6	13	3	6
Other	3	6	11	23	6	13

Notes: 1. In the "administrators" category, only administrators were involved in 34 responses for short listing, 9 responses for interviews, and 16 responses for selection. Of these, single administrators were involved in 23 responses for short-listing, 10 for selection, while no single administrator interviewed candidates by themselves.

2. Trustees by themselves were identified in one response for interviewing principal candidates, and four responses for selecting successful candidates.

3. "Other" included three mentions of selection committees in the short-listing process, seven mentions for interviewing, and four mentions for selecting candidates. The compositions of these selection committees were not revealed. Two responses identified parent involvement during interviews. In addition, two responses mentioned the involvement of a "pastor" during interviews and in the selection of the successful candidate.

4. No response was received from 14 superintendents regarding short-listing, 15 regarding interviews, and 16 regarding selection.

included in at least 12 of these. While some respondents noted that interviewing committees were composed of administrators only, not one respondent indicated that interviews were conducted by one administrator. In one system, trustees conducted interviews of prospective candidates without any assistance. Other stakeholder involvement also increased. In addition to the formal stakeholder groups, parents were mentioned as being involved in two committee types and a pastor was included in one committee. Moreover, results from the questionnaire indicated that trustees were more involved in interviewing candidates than in either of the other two steps in the selection process.

The selection decision was made by committees in the majority of school systems. Administrators were involved in the selection of the new principal in most school systems. In fact, 10 respondents noted that the selection decision was made by a single administrator. Overall, central office administrators participated in 9 of the 12 types of committees identified. One of these committees consisted of administrators only. Trustees were included in seven types of committees. Four respondents noted that trustees made the selection decision by themselves. Four types of committees included school council members. Principals and school staff each participated in three different types of committees while a pastor was named as a member of one of the committees.

Any of the stakeholders could have been members of selection committees which were identified at each of the three stages. Selection committees were identified by three respondents as being involved in short-listing. Seven respondents noted their involvement in interviewing, while four included selection committees in the selection decision.

In addition to the above, some superintendents and principals noted that stakeholders have input into the development of principal profiles and criteria to be used in the selection process.

Sources of data used in evaluating candidates. Both superintendents and principals provided information regarding sources of data used in evaluating candidates for principalships.

A summary of superintendent opinions (SQ 7) regarding the relative importance ascribed to sources of data identified in the questionnaire is outlined in Table 5.5. Not all respondents rated the five aspects. Nine ranked only some of the aspects listed. In addition, four superintendents ranked all five aspects but gave equal rank to two or more of the aspects. Some superintendents listed additional aspects and ranked them higher than those included in the questionnaire. These are not included in the ranking but are recorded in the notes for the table. Additional aspects which were ranked higher than others on the list included (a) achievement of results, (b) performance in a similar position, (c) high level of previous performance, and (d) pastor's reference. The superintendent identifying the pastoral reference commented that

> *this is a reference check of a sort but it's the "degree" of involvement [that is important] not that a priest says you are Catholic.*

Each of these aspects received one first place ranking.

Two means of data collection intended to extract evidence regarding quality received significantly different ratings. References ranked highest in importance as a means of data collection, while written reports from current or past supervisors ranked fourth. All five superintendents interviewed supported this finding and offered two reasons to support the higher reliability of reference checks. First, there appears to be a reluctance to be candid in writing evaluative statements on staff performance. One of the superintendents made this comment:

> *Written reports tend to be more generic. Those writing these reports often frame the information in a manner which avoids possible legal difficulties, however, the resulting report is of little value. Oral reference checks tend to be more frank.*

During an oral reference check, discussion could be extended on certain aspects under review if the data received warrant further consideration. Second, one superintendent noted that perhaps school systems are not as sophisticated as they could be in evaluating staff. Therefore, the information gathered may not accurately reflect candidates' potential as administrators.

Table 5.5

Frequency Distributions of Ranked Importance of Selected Methods of Collecting Data Used for Evaluating Candidates in the Selection Process, as Reported by Superintendents (SQ. 7)
(N= 63)

Method	Ranks of importance					
	1	2	3	4	5	Not
	f	f	f	f	f	selected
References (including reference checks	22	22	4	6	6	3
Experience	17	14	21	6	3	2
Performance in interviews	8	14	18	9	10	4
Written reports from current/past supervisors	11	12	9	11	15	5
Letter of application and resume	3	3	8	21	21	7

Notes: 1. Ranks of 1, 2, 3, and 4 include equal ranks of 1.5, 2.5, 3.5, and 4.5 in order to simplify presentation of results.

2. Other methods suggested by superintendents included (a) performance profile analysis, (b) past performance (personal and professional performance; performance in a similar position; and, colleague statements regarding performance), (c) record of achievement results, and (d) Catholic background.

"Experience" was undefined in the questionnaire, yet it ranked second in importance by superintendents. Additional comments made by two superintendents, indicated that "results achieved" or a "high level of previous performance" were more important than experience. Similar comments made throughout the questionnaire indicated that more importance was attached to desirable results than to time in a position.

Although the letter of application and resume received the lowest rankings, one superintendent noted that

> *the letter determines whether the resume will even be read; but I don't give it as much weight once the more interactive processes are in place.*

A summary of principals' opinions (PQ 4) about what importance should be associated with the identified sources of data is provided in Table 5.6. Only 82% of principals rated all five aspects. One principal did not rank any of the aspects listed. However, some principals added other aspects and gave them higher rankings than those listed in the questionnaire. These aspects included (a) results achieved, (b) demonstrated abilities, (c) previous performance, (d) *"gut feeling"* of selectors, (e) video of work with other adults, (f) communication skills, and (g) demonstrated ability to communicate and interact with people. Each of these received one first place ranking.

Two notable differences are evident between responses from the two groups. First, principals ranked evidence of experience before references as the most important aspect for collecting data, although principals agreed with superintendents that the quality of experience was more important than the length of experience. One principal noted that *"several [references were] required as some are not reliable."* This comment was also addressed to written reports from supervisors. These comments and three of the additional sources mentioned provide some indication that principals believed that demonstrated performance was more important than another's perception of that performance or the principal's character.

Second, principals rated written reports provided by supervisors

Table 5.6

Frequency Distributions of Ranked Importance of Selected Methods of Collecting Data Used for Evaluating Candidates in the Selection Process, as Reported by Principals (PQ. 4)
(N = 62)

Method	Ranks of importance					Not selected
	1 f	2 f	3 f	4 f	5 f	
Experience	21	17	11	4	5	4
References (including reference checks)	12	22	12	7	3	6
Written reports from current/past supervisors	17	15	12	7	7	4
Performance in interviews	4	7	10	18	17	5
Letter of application and resume	6	6	7	14	21	8

Notes: 1. Ranks of 1, 2, 3, and 4 include equal ranks of 1.5, 2.5, 3.5, and 4.5 in order to simplify presentation of results.

2. Other methods suggested by principals included (a) results achieved, (b) portfolio, (c) academic achievement in personal continuing education, (d) *"gut feeling"* (based on personal philosophy and needs of the community), (e) demonstrated ability to communicate/interact with people, (f) previous performance, and (g) involvement in an Extended Assessment Program.

ahead of performance in interviews as being an important aspect of data collection. The views of one principal may provide some insight into this difference:

> *Interviews can be very deceiving; some candidates have an artistic flair for interviews but their talk is not supported by actions.*

Training for Individuals Involved in Selection (SQ 5)

As mentioned earlier, a review of the documents revealed that only one system had articulated any process for training members of the selection committee. In the questionnaire, 42 superintendents noted that no training was provided for individuals involved in the selection process.Eleven stated they had a process which was not very thorough. One of these 11 indicated that *"general information sessions"* were held with prospective selectors. Only eight superintendents indicated that their systems had a thorough process of training for members of the selection committee. The questionnaire did not explore the type and extent of training provided.

Information Provided to Successful Candidates (SQ 8; PQ 5)

In the questionnaire, 76% of superintendents (47 of 62) stated that they inform successful candidates about the specific reasons why they were selected as principals. One superintendent indicated he also notified unsuccessful candidates of the reasons why they were not selected. Another stated that he did not advise principals of these reasons unless they were specifically requested.

By comparison, 64 % of principals who responded to the question reported disclosure of reasons for being hired to the position. Ten principals noted that there was full disclosure of the reasons while 28 reported that there had been some disclosure. The remaining principals indicated that no disclosure had been made of specific reasons they had been hired. One principal from a small urban community stated that he was only advised *"that the interview went really well."* Moreover, this principal noted that he had actually applied for another position in the system but had been interviewed for the one offered. Another principal stated that over time he has become more aware of the reasons for which he was hired.

Preference Regarding Selection (SQ 2: PQ 2)

All 32 policies received from school systems referred to the recruitment of candidates. Of these, 21 indicated that positions were advertised both internally and externally. Eight systems noted that preference would be given to local candidates if *"all things were equal."* Only five systems identified a definite preference for internal candidates.

A summary of superintendents' and principals' perceptions of their systems' preferences appears in Table 5.7. Perceptions of the two groups differed substantially. While the majority of superintendents stated that their system was committed to selecting the best candidate, a similarly large percentage of principals believed their system was committed to selecting from within the system. A more comprehensive analysis of results from the questionnaire is provided below to help explain this difference.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the 62 principals in the sample were employed by only 25 of the school systems participating in the study. A better comparison of responses of superintendents and principals can be obtained if results from these 25 systems are analyzed.

Of 16 superintendents that stated their system preferred to select candidates internally, only 9 were in systems having principals who completed the questionnaire. Similarly, 14 of 46 superintendents who noted that their system preferred to select the best candidate represented systems with principals in the study. Two other systems also had principals who completed the questionnaire. The superintendent of one system did not respond to the question. The other superintendent indicated a dual preference and was identified as "undecided."

All 16 principals from six of the nine systems identified as preferring to select internally also believed their system preferred to select from within. In each case, these principals had been chosen from within the system.

Superintendents from three other systems noted a preference to select from within the system. However, not all principals employed by

Table 5.7

Frequency Distributions of Preferences of School Systems Regarding Selection of Principals, as Reported by Superintendents and Principals (SQ. 2; PQ. 2)

Preference	Superintendents (N= 62)		Principals (N= 61)	
	f	%f	f	%f
Select from within the system	16	26	37	61
Select from outside the system	0	0	1	2
Select the best candidate	46	74	23	38

Notes: 1. The 62 principals in the sample were in only 25 school systems, therefore inferences drawn from the different responses would be inconclusive.

2. No response was received from one superintendent and one principal.

these systems shared their superintendent's opinion. Of the 21 principals employed by these systems, 16 agreed that their system preferred to hire internally and 15 of these had been selected from within the system. The other principal provided no indication of position prior to selection to the current position. In contrast, 5 of the 21 principals indicated a belief that their system preferred to select the best candidate available. Three of these were selected from within the system, one from outside the system, while the fifth principal provided no indication of placement at the time of selection.

As mentioned earlier, 14 of the 25 superintendents in this analysis stated a belief that their system preferred to select the best candidate for the position. All 13 principals employed by 9 of these 14 systems expressed a similar belief. Eight of these 13 principals were selected from within the system and 5 were selected from outside the system.

However, not all of the 11 principals from the other five systems held similar opinions. Opinions regarding their system's preference varied as follows: (a) preference for internal appointments--six mentions, (b) preference for external appointments--three mentions, (c) preference for the "best candidate"--one mention, and (d) no response--one mention. In one system where two principals held divergent views, one believed that the system preferred to select the best candidate and the other believed that the system preferred to select candidates from outside the system. In both instances, the principals had been selected from within the system. In fact, 9 of the 11 principals were selected from within the system.

Beliefs regarding preference for the remaining two systems could not be compared because neither superintendent provided a clear indication of their system's preference regarding the selection of principals.

During the interviews, superintendents identified circumstances which could precipitate serious consideration of candidates from outside the system. Four of five superintendents noted that deficiencies relating to the candidate pool was sufficient reason to extend consideration outside of the system. Additional comments noted that this deficiency could be attributed to (a) a limited quantity of qualified internal candidates, (b) questionable quality of available candidates, or (c) the absence of necessary qualifications. For example, a principal fluent in the French language would be necessary for a Francophone school.

Tables 5.8 and 5.9 provide a comparison of superintendents' and principals' perceptions of their system's preference toward the selection of principals with the actual selection of principals involved in the study. An expectation that there would be a high correlation between a perceived preference for internal candidates and the number actually selected from within the system was substantiated by the high number of principals selected internally by those systems. The 15 systems in the study which indicated a preference for the best candidate would be expected to exhibit a relatively equal distribution of selections from inside and outside the system, however, the data revealed that 15 of 21 principals hired by these systems were selected internally. One of the superintendents interviewed observed that often *"the devil you know is preferable to the devil you don't know"* as an explanation of this phenomenon.

Candidate Pool (SQ 4.a & b)

Discussion regarding the candidate pool is divided into two parts: (a) the degree of satisfaction with the candidate pool, and (b) factors contributing to a limited candidate pool.

A summary of superintendent responses about satisfaction with the candidate pool is detailed in Table 5.10. One-third of those superintendents who expressed a definite opinion regarding the candidate pool declared dissatisfaction with the quality of the candidate pool. Some superintendents gave qualified responses noting that contextual factors contributed to the number and quality of the candidates.

Superintendents who expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of the candidate pool identified a number of factors which they believed contributed to a limited candidate pool. Of the 63 superintendents

Table 5.8

Frequency Distributions of Selection of Principals by School Systems as Compared to Superintendents' Statements Regarding System Preference
(N= 62)

Superintendents' perception of policy preference	Actual source of principals		
	Internal	External	No response
Internal	33	2	2
Best candidate	15	6	1
Undecided	2	0	0
No response	1	0	0

Table 5.9

Frequency Distributions of Selection of Principals by School Systems as Compared to Principals' Perceptions Regarding System Preference
(N= 62)

Principals' perception of policy preference	Actual source of principals		
	Internal	External	No response
Internal	35	1	1
Best candidate	15	6	2
External	1	0	0
No response	0	1	0

Table 5.10

Frequency Distributions of Degree of Satisfaction With the Quality of the Candidate Pool for the Selection of Principals, as Identified by Superintendents (SQ.4.a)
(N= 57)

Opinion	f	%f
Satisfied	36	63
Dissatisfied	21	37

Notes: 1. Three responses were classified as "undecided" because they gave both "yes" and "no" responses. Two identified specific circumstances (e.g., time of year, geography) as reasons for the dual responses.

2. Two jurisdictions indicated that the question was not applicable because they had not hired a principal recently. One had not hired a principal since 1987.

3. No response was received from one system.

completing the questionnaire, 26 provided a total of 10 reasons for a limited candidate pool. Of these 26 superintendents, 4 indicated a general satisfaction with the quality of the pool and 2 provided a mixed response.

Factors provided by superintendents included (a) the changing nature and demands of the position--13 mentions, (b) the location of the position--10 mentions, (c) lack of preparation--6 mentions, (d) time of year--4 mentions, (e) size of the school--3 mentions, (f) insufficient pay--3 mentions, (g) a reluctance to self-initiate a move--2 mentions, (h) age--2 mentions, and one mention each for (i) local issues, and (j) the complexity of the documentation process to qualify and apply for an administrative position.

The changing role of the principal and increasing demands on the position have presented an additional barrier to some potential candidates. One superintendent noted that the introduction of site-based management had changed the role of the principal from that of an educational leader to manager. A principal offered this observation:

> *There is little incentive for good teachers to become school principals. The present structure in schools tries to make a few people do too much without district or Alberta Teachers' Association support.*

Additional demands have increased the stress associated with the position and many potential candidates do not see the prestige of the position as "*worth the extra work.*" Three of five principals and all five central office personnel interviewed in Phase Three of the study supported this conclusion. One superintendent remarked in the questionnaire that it is possible that the principalship is "*not a desired position*" because of the "*interference of school councils, [and] a government which ridicules administrators.*" Closely related to the nature and demands of the position is a suggestion that administrative remuneration does not reflect the work expected of the administrator.

Location of the school as a potential factor in limiting the number and quality of candidates included a number of related issues. Isolation and distance from large urban centers contribute to difficulties in recruiting candidates to many rural areas or the more northern communities. The size of the school also appeared to have a limiting influence on the candidate pool. In addition, the cost of living associated with residence in many rural communities may make the position less attractive for many.

A lack of experience or reduced access to training programs were also posited as possible barriers to candidates applying for administrative positions. The increasing complexity of the principalship requires a range of skills which a classroom teacher is not likely to acquire apart from a planned program of internship or workshops designed to teach these skills.

Some respondents remarked that the time of the year influenced the size and quality of the candidate pool. Potential candidates were reluctant to leave their current assignment or uproot families during a school year.

Age was also considered a possible factor contributing to the reluctance of some qualified teachers to apply for an administrative position. In the past few years, cutbacks in education funding have resulted in less hiring and smaller teaching staffs across the province. Consequently, the average age of teachers in the province has increased from 38.9 years on August 31, 1986 to 41.7 on August 31, 1995.

Finally, a variety of community issues, a hesitation to leave the security of a tenured position, and perceived complexities of the application process were cited as possible reasons why qualified individuals did not pursue a move into administration.

In addition to factors which superintendents believed that contributed to a limited response to administrative opportunities, some stated that *"good candidates"* had applied for recent positions but these were *"too few in number."* Further, one superintendent reported dissatisfaction with the number and quality of candidates applying for high school administrative positions.

As mentioned earlier, reduced access to training programs was cited as a factor contributing to a limited candidate pool. All principals and central office personnel interviewed were asked if pre-service training would help alleviate this problem. Their responses were unanimous in support for training for prospective administrators. Opinions on the value of pre-service training ranged from *"I believe it could help"* to *"this is very critical."* Core components for a training program suggested by those interviewed included (a) management skills associated with site-based management, (b) personnel management, including staff development and evaluation, (c) public relations, (d) leadership, (e) development and supervision of curriculum, and (f) student assessment.

Opinions varied substantially regarding who should be responsible for pre-service training. Principals who were interviewed clearly indicated that school systems that wanted excellent administrators should become involved in identifying and training potential administrators. Central office staff offered a slightly different view. They identified two levels of training necessary. First, candidates should be expected to acquire a general base of knowledge about the nature of organizations and leadership. Central office personnel identified universities as playing a critical role in providing basic education in this area. Second, they noted that school systems have a role to play in providing professional development which assists prospective administrators to learn of the culture and specific expectations of the system.

Preparation for the Principalship (SQ 10; PQ 6)

Tables 5.11 and 5.12 provide an overall summary of superintendents' and principals' responses regarding the existence of training for prospective administrators or new principals in their systems. While these tables provide an overview of the total sample in each group, they do not accurately portray the level of agreement between principals and superintendents in the same systems. As mentioned earlier, principals in the sample were chosen from only 25 systems in the province. A more accurate comparison of individual understandings of training programs available is provided in the following discussions.

Eight superintendents and 28 principals signified that their school systems provided preservice training for educators wishing to become

Table 5.11

Frequency Distributions of Provision by School Systems of Pre-selection Training for Potential Principal Candidates, as Identified by Superintendents and Principals (SQ. 10.a; PQ. 6.a)

Response	Superintendents (N= 61)		Principals (N= 61)	
	f	%f	f	%f
Yes	8	13	28	46
No	53	87	33	54

Note: No response was received from two superintendents and one principal.

Table 5.12

Frequency Distributions of Provision by School Systems of Training for New Principals, as Identified by Superintendents and Principals (SQ. 10.b; PQ. 6.b)

Response	Superintendents (N= 59)		Principals (N= 59)	
	f	%f	f	%f
Yes	16	27	21	36
No	43	73	38	64

Note: No response was received from four superintendents and two principals. Also, one principal was undecided.

school administrators. Of these 28 principals, 22 were employed by three of the eight systems identified by superintendents as having pre-service training programs. All 22 principals agreed that training programs were available. The other six principals represented four other systems which did not report training programs. Opinions regarding the existence of a pre-service training program in these systems varied markedly. While these six principals noted the that training programs existed, eight other principals and superintendents from these four systems did not agree with their assessment.

Seven of the eight systems provided a description of the programs available. Three of these also included detailed descriptions of their programs with the documentation provided in Phase One of the study. The range of training provided varied from bursaries to teachers interested in taking university courses to a course recognized for credit by the University of Alberta. At least four systems provided a minimum of 50 hours of instruction plus on-the-job experience for persons interested in school administration. However, successful completion of the program was not a guarantee of a position. Successful candidates entered the talent pool for the school system and were eligible to apply for vacancies which became available.

Of the 63 superintendents completing the questionnaire, 16 indicated that their systems provided in-service programs for new principals. Opinions regarding the provision of training programs also varied. The majority of principals who completed the questionnaire, 44 of 62, were employed by 10 of 16 systems identified as having training programs for new principals. Only 21 of these principals agreed with their superintendent's assessment of the status of these programs. In fact, only one of the 10 systems was there complete agreement between the superintendent and principals. Opinions among principals in three systems varied about the status of these programs, and in 6 of the 10 systems there was no agreement between the superintendent and principals.

Descriptions of programs were provided by 13 of the 16 superintendents signifying the existence of in-service programs in their systems. One of these had provided some detail of the program with the documentation obtained in Phase One. The format of in-service programs also varied in scope and complexity. In some cases, the programs focused on orienting principals to the responsibilities of the position, policies of the system, school and system culture, and support available for administrators. Other activities described were more ongoing in nature. These included (a) formal and informal discussion between central office administrators and principals, (b) activities at monthly administrator meetings, (c) workshops, and (d) attendance at the Devon Leadership Institute. The workshops referred to covered topics such as staff evaluation, staffing procedures, and financial management.

Specific Research Question I.b

To what extent do contextual variables (e.g., size and location of school systems) influence policies and practices used in selection of principals?

Superintendents and principals noted their opinions about whether characteristics of the school or the community affected the selection of principals. A summary of these findings appear in Tables 5.13 and 5.14. In addition, some elaborated on the specific contextual variables they believed affected the process.

Characteristics of the School (SQ 11: PQ 7)

The tables indicate that 82% of superintendents and 89% of principals agreed that special characteristics of the school influenced the selection of principals. The "match" of the principal to specific needs or characteristics of the school was the theme underlying comments from both groups. For example, one principal's comment noted that *"each school has unique characteristics and the leader should be well matched."* A superintendent was more direct and stated that *"there has to be a match so that the candidate has [the] best chance of success."*

At least six broad categories were identified by both groups. These included (a) a special focus of the school, (b) needs of the school, (c) the "personality" of the school, (d) cultural or religious orientation of

Table 5.13

Frequency Distributions of Consideration by School Systems of Characteristics of Particular Schools in the Selection of Principals, as Identified by Superintendents and Principals (SQ. 11.a; PQ. 7.a)

Response	Superintendents (N= 61)		Principals (N= 61)	
	f	%f	f	%f
Yes	50	82	54	89
No	11	18	7	11

Note: No response was received from two superintendents and one principal.

Table 5.14

Frequency Distributions of Consideration by School Systems of the Nature of Communities in the Selection of Principals, as Identified by Superintendents and Principals (SQ. 11.b; PQ. 7.b)

Response	Superintendents (N= 59)		Principals (N= 61)	
	f	%f	f	%f
Yes	45	76	49	80
No	14	24	12	20

Note: No response was received from four superintendents and one principal.

students, (e) size and configuration of the school, and (f) direction of the school.

The focus of the school was further divided into four areas. First, respondents noted that there are schools which have been founded or reorganized according to a particular philosophy. One principal noted that a school with a *"teaching through the arts"* philosophy should have a principal who is committed to maintaining that philosophy. Second, many schools have a distinctive cultural focus. French-language schools were specifically mentioned in the survey, however, there are other similar schools (e.g., Jewish and Chinese) which are designed to meet similar cultural interests. Third, some schools incorporate specialized methods of delivery. For example, a principal observed that *"high tech schools thrive under technologically astute administrators."* Finally, many schools have a specific focus on a particular aspect of their program which may include fine arts, athletics, or special education. Both groups were clear in their belief that a match of the philosophy and expertise of the principal to the school was vital for the ongoing success of the program and the tenure of the administrator.

With respect to needs of the school, one respondent stated that *"there is an attempt made to match the strengths of [the] principal with the needs of [the] school."* Although the majority of references to "needs" did not define their specific nature, respondents were definite that these needs influence the selection process. Needs which were identified included (a) staff deficiencies, (b) instructional leadership, (c) discipline, and (d) learning problems.

Also, both groups recognized the uniqueness of school climate or school "personality" and the importance of "principal fit" to the school. They noted specifically that staff mix (e.g., mature staff and young staff) add to the distinctiveness of school "personality."

Another school-related variable was the culture of the school. Various factors were identified by respondents as contributing to the culture of the school which could affect the selection of a principal: religious influence (e.g., Mennonite or Catholic), military presence, native interests, and rural influences. One comment emphasized the importance of "new" principal awareness of and respect for these factors.

In some situations the size and type of the school are considered during the selection process. A few principals noted that a first-time principal is often hired to a small school and that *"large complex schools are offered to experienced principals."* Other comments indicated that the type of school (e.g., elementary, middle school) also appeared to be a factor in selecting principals. For example, principal candidates with previous experience in a similar school were frequently given preferential consideration.

"Direction of the school" could have been included with school needs, but because of the specific need for a "fit" between the school and the new principal in this situation, it is discussed separately. One principal asked

> *What is needed? A change agent? A hired gun? A calming influence? A person to carry on initiatives that have been started? These [considerations] are very important in choosing a candidate.*

While "fit" is important, the match required is with the intended change of direction or emphasis rather than with the current school culture. This is often difficult to achieve with an internal candidate. For example, a principal remarked that

> *our school has a veteran staff with very few changes. A principal hired from outside the district may be able to deal with changes [and] innovation somewhat more capably.*

While most superintendents and principals believed that the characteristics of the school affect the outcome of the selection process, others were less certain. One superintendent remarked that existing policy in the system allowed for flexibility in the selection process, although no recognition was given to any specific circumstances. A principal commented that consideration of special circumstances was more important in rural school systems than in a large urban setting. Another principal observed that

> *people are placed within the system almost in a 'willy-nilly' fashion if*

> *they have been selected from within. Outside candidates are selected for a purpose that usually has something to do with the characteristics of the school.*

Nature of the Community (SQ 11: PQ 7)

A majority of respondents from both groups also expressed a belief that the nature of the community was considered in the selection of new principals. Many descriptors used in identifying school characteristics which influence the selection of principals also appeared in relation to communities. For example, the focus of the school, culture and religion, the complexity and size of community were mentioned as important factors to be considered. Comments made regarding each of these factors were similar enough to those stated in relation to school characteristics that they will not be repeated in this section. However, four other factors were mentioned by either principals or superintendents. These included (a) community expectations, (b) character of the community, (c) geography, and (d) local politics. The common thread of principal "fit" to specific circumstances also appeared in these comments.

With respect to community expectations, respondents indicated that communities vary in complexity and that expectations of the school vary markedly. One superintendent noted that

> *some communities are interested in "back to the basics," others need a strong sports bent. Others need someone who can "smooth rough waters."*

Another commented that

> *in a very few of our communities, the residents have become disenchanted with the school and require a principal who can restore confidence.*

Responses from both groups suggested that either input from the community or perceptions of community needs were considered in the selection process.

Similarly the "character" of communities vary. "Diversity," "rural," "urban," "socioeconomic factors," "ethnic mix," "complexity," "confidence," and "disunity" were all terms or concepts included in comments made primarily by principals. Each of these suggests a need for specific skills, knowledge, and attitudes in prospective candidates. One principal remarked that

> *some communities need an administrator who is familiar with the nature and history [of the community].*

Another commented that

> *knowing the community is important in assisting to build programs that put the unity back into the community.*

Also apparent from the comments was the influence of geography in the selection process. One superintendent stated that because their communities are small they try to hire candidates that will make a commitment to the community. A principal observed that

> *a small community may require more of a diplomatic, friendly principal.*

In contrast, another superintendent remarked that the small size of the community enabled them to place a person with less experience.

Finally, four principals identified local politics as a factor in the selection process. One remarked

> *I do believe that a community consisting of a majority of parents who believe in their right to articulate their ideas should be matched with a principal who is able to value that right and manage diverse voices.*

Another noted that the nature of the school council involvement with the school as well as issues in the community (e.g., discipline, religion, past concerns with administration) were all factors which were considered in the selection of a principal.

Specific Research Question 1.c

To what extent are superintendents and principals satisfied with current selection policies and practices?

Discussion regarding satisfaction of superintendents and principals with current selection practices used by their school systems is divided into two parts: (a) the degree of satisfaction expressed by both groups, and (b) changes which could be made in the process.

Information about the degree of satisfaction expressed by both groups (SQ 12.a:PQ 8.a) is outlined in Table 5.15. Of those who completed the questionnaire, 97% of superintendents and 90 % of principals indicated a general satisfaction with the current selection practices used in their school system. However, a few individuals expressed dissatisfaction with the process.

Changes Suggested by Superintendents (SQ 12.b)

In spite of the overwhelming expression of satisfaction among superintendents regarding practices currently used by their systems, 37 superintendents offered suggestions for improvement in 11 different areas: (a) stakeholder involvement in the selection process--11 mentions, (b) leadership training for prospective candidates--8 mentions, (c) the candidate pool--7 mentions, (d) the selection committee--5 mentions, (e) the screening and interview process--3 mentions, (f) data used in the process--2 mentions, (g) policies--2 mentions, and one mention for each of (h) standards of performance, (i) transparency of the process, (j) the time involved, and (k) assistance to those applying for a principalship. Some superintendents provided feedback for more than one area which accounted for more than 37 mentions. Although the number of mentions of various changes differed substantially, the importance of the change suggested was not necessarily linked to the frequency of citations.

While stakeholder involvement received the greatest attention from superintendents, responses varied markedly. Of the 11 superintendents suggesting this change, 7 advocated increased involvement of various stakeholders and 4 argued against it. The two aspects most frequently mentioned were an increased role for staff members in developing principal profiles, and increased staff involvement on selection committees. Others commented on the need to increase school council and community involvement. However, four superintendents noted that political interference by stakeholders was detrimental to the selection of principals. Two of these referred particularly to the political interference of school board trustees. Another commented that trustee involvement often means that *"school needs receive more attention than what is good for*

Table 5.15

Frequency Distributions of Levels of Satisfaction With the Current Process Used for Selecting Principals, as Expressed by Superintendents and Principals
(SQ. 12; PQ. 8)

Rating	Superintendents (N= 60)		Principals (N= 58)	
	f	%f	f	%f
Very satisfied	16	27	15	26
Satisfied	42	70	37	64
Dissatisfied	2	3	5	9
Very dissatisfied	0	0	1	2

Note: No response was received from two superintendents and three principals. Also, one superintendent and one principal were undecided.

the total system."

Eight superintendents indicated that more opportunities for training existing staff should be provided. The advantage of a local training process is best summed up in the following comment:

> *I would like to enhance our training process with a view to developing communities of leaders which in turn lend to developing very strong, well-prepared individual leaders.*

As mentioned earlier, more than a third of superintendents participating in the study registered a concern with the size and quality of the candidate pool. Therefore, some superintendents noted that initiatives to increase the size of the candidate pool were important to the improvement of the selection of principals. One noted that it would be to a system's advantage to *"cast a wider net"* and actively recruit candidates from a much wider area than is currently considered.

Superintendents also commented on the role of the selection committee and the need for training members of the committee. Some suggested that the selection committee should only make recommendations regarding possible candidates to the superintendent. Others noted that training members of the selection committee would better prepare them for the important task of selecting the best candidate for the position.

Other suggestions included the need to give attention to screening practices. While one superintendent stated that less emphasis should be placed on the interview, another suggested that the interviews should be expanded by incorporating other activities relevant to the selection process, but no mention was made regarding what activities should be included. In addition, two superintendents noted that data used in selecting principals should receive more attention. For example, better data on the previous work performance as vice-principals would improve the decision-making process.

Four suggestions were mentioned only once: providing more time to the process, defining performance standards for criteria used in the selection process, making the process more "open," and providing assistance to individuals interested in applying for administrative positions. The "assistance" referred to primarily consisted of information that would help potential candidates understand the process.

Changes Suggested by Principals (PQ 8.b)

Principals also indicated a high degree of satisfaction with selection practices used in their systems, however this may be attributed to their success in being selected to their current position. One principal suggested that a survey of unsuccessful candidates might provide a different view of the practices in each system.

Although the level of satisfaction was high, suggestions for change were provided by 42 principals employed by 22 different systems. One principal directed his comments to the entire selection process in his system when he referred to it as

> *a vague and unfounded process that leans more on historical precedents than any kind of well-thought-out plan.*

Similarly, another remarked that

> *aside from new principals undergoing their one-year evaluation, there is no evaluation of principals. Senior administration doesn't have a clue what is or is not working in district schools. Gross incompetency and stellar performance are both given the same recognition--nil.*

Principals identified 12 areas which could be changed to improve selection practices: (a) interview and decision-making practices--six mentions, (b) opportunities for aspiring administrators--five mentions, (c) stakeholder involvement--five mentions, (d) data used in the process--four mentions, (e) criteria used to measure relative suitability for a position--four mentions, (f) training for prospective candidates--four mentions, (g) feedback to candidates--three mentions, (h) match with school--three mentions, (i) policy--two mentions, (j) candidate pool--two mentions, (k) experience--two mentions, and (l) training for selectors--one mention. Seven of these areas (a, c, d, f, i, j, and l) are similar to changes identified by superintendents.

Practices relating to interviews and the selection decision received the most attention from principals. One indicated that one-half hour interviews were entirely inadequate. He suggested that candidates commit up to two days in the school, community, and school system engaging in interviews with trustees, central office personnel, parents, and teachers. Time spent in the community and with school staff would provide the prospective principal with a better understanding of the job and local expectations. Some principals noted that this information would assist in making an informed decision if the position were offered. Moreover, there was some indication that if these principals had known more about the school, staff, and the community they may have made a different decision. In addition, two principals noted that the use of more objective instrumentation or practices, such as the "Principal Perceiver" or behavioral descriptive interviews could improve the quality of the interview.

While recently appointed principals emphasized the need to enhance opportunities for aspiring administrators, responses varied substantially. One expressed the desire for an opportunity to apply for a position rather than being directly appointed without having to do through the application process, whereas another noted that principals in their system had more freedom to freely apply for new vacancies. A third principal believed that open competitions unfairly locked prospective candidates from small schools into competing for positions in similarly sized schools. In contrast, a principal from another system noted that principals from smaller elementary or junior high schools frequently moved up to take limited positions in senior high schools, although opportunities to move in the other direction seemed non-existent.

Five principals from different school systems commented on the desirability of increased involvement of stakeholders. Parent and school council member involvement was mentioned most frequently, but student involvement was mentioned only once. One principal registered a desire to be involved because the individual being chosen would replace him while he was on leave for a year.

Another suggested change was related to data used in selection practices. In general, principals believed that more attention should be given to an individual's record of performance and that past performance in the school was more important than involvement outside of the school. Principals also suggested that the educational philosophies of all individuals involved in the selection process, including those of the candidate, should be thoroughly explored during the interview because this would provide prospective candidates and the selection committee a better opportunity to determine the degree of "fit" on educational issues.

Similar concern was directed to the choice and clarity of criteria used in the selection of principals. Principals stated that more attention should be given to identifying criteria required for the position and clearly communicating those criteria to potential candidates. In particular, one principal noted that experienced individuals are often overlooked in the process with no indication as to why they were not considered. Another remarked that

> *decisions need to be made based on what is best for children, not what is acceptable without undue heartache or stress on the part of the CEO and the district board. Get rid of politics and do what is right for kids.*

Some principals also noted that more opportunities for training of aspiring principals were important. They noted that the increasing complexity of the position and added responsibilities were primary reasons for this recommendation. One remarked that *"current principals need to learn more about mentoring"* in order to identify and assist potential administrative candidates.

Suggestions regarding feedback to candidates focussed on two needs. First, candidates should be given the reasons for which they were hired, although no specific justification for this suggestion was offered. Second, unsuccessful candidates should receive feedback explaining why they were not hired because this information could assist professional growth and future applications for administrative positions.

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the match between the principal, the school, and the community are important considerations in the selection of principals. In support of this conclusion, three principals indicated that more effort should be made to ensure a good match between the principal and the school.

Principals' concern with the size and quality of the candidate pool primarily focussed on a need to recruit more potential candidates into training programs. One remarked that current principals should be responsible for proactively recruiting young, talented teachers who demonstrated administrative potential.

Suggestions relating to experience varied markedly. For example, one principal noted that potential candidates should have more experience than is typical before applying for an administrative position. In contrast, another remarked that there are many good teachers who could move into administration without an intermediate step.

Principals also noted a concern that policies should be updated and that policies could more clearly identify selection practices.

In contrast to suggestions for change, one principal suggested that change could actually "make matters worse."

Other Comments (SQ 13: PQ 9)

In addition to comments on issues identified in the questionnaire, superintendents and principals provided other comments on the selection of principals. Many of these additional comments were similar to those made earlier in the questionnaire, and the ideas expressed have been included with the appropriate sections in the chapter. However, other comments deserve further discussion.

Comments from both groups addressed eight different issues related to the selection of principals. Six of these eight issues were identified by both superintendents and principals: (a) pre-service training, (b) recruitment, (c) selection practices, (d) skills necessary for the principalship, (e) training of new principals, and (f) placement of principals. In addition, principals also mentioned the fit of the principal to the school. One superintendent emphasized the desirability of having principals separated from the Alberta Teachers' Association, noting that principals should have personal services contracts with their school systems.

With respect to preservice training, superintendents made only two comments. First, it was suggested that prospective administrators should be required to obtain certification as principals through a university. The second superintendent suggested that *"perhaps sabbatical programs should be tied to training future administrators."* In contrast, principals focussed on the need for school systems to give attention to pre-service training for prospective administrators. This preparation was considered to be important in view of the recent change to site-based management, changing societal expectations, and increased competition from private and charter schools. Suggestions made by principals about types of pre-service training varied. Job-shadowing and on-the-job training were included with secondments to the private and public sector as possible means of training individuals for the principalship. Principals with proven records of performance were identified as possible "trainers" for prospective administrators.

Opinions regarding recruitment varied markedly. A superintendent remarked that it would be advantageous to recruit from within, however he noted that this would require the system to develop a process for *"identifying, training, and selecting competent individuals."* In similar fashion, a principal noted that recruitment of teacher candidates should be done *"in order to promote 'right' people from within."* In contrast, another principal stated that hiring from outside the system provided *"a necessary catalyst for change."* She indicated that differing points of view provide a tension which often serves to strengthen a system. Further, she remarked that familiarity associated with internal candidates can breed contempt as well as an atmosphere where risk-taking is frowned upon.

Comments from both principals and superintendents noted the increasing politicization of selection practices. One superintendent attributed this to the increased role of school councils. School council members want to be involved and do not hesitate to get "political" if their preferred candidate is not selected. In contrast, one of the principals emphasized the need to consider school council feedback. Another principal commented on the political nature of some appointments and the fact that some candidates are personally known by board members or the superintendent and are given preferential consideration. For example, one principal reported that in a previous competition in the system a candidate had actively campaigned for and was selected for the principalship of a school. Campaign activities included a telephone lobby, posters, and invitations to board members to visit the school in which the candidate worked. Further, concern was expressed by one of the superintendents that

> *very few systems have satisfactory evaluation report forms which address the many facets of the principalship.*

The lack of adequate information made the selection of candidates more difficult. Another noted that visits to the present work site of a candidate could provide valuable information which would facilitate the selection process. Finally, a principal remarked that there is often an "*air of secrecy*" surrounding the selection process. While reasons for the selection or rejection of candidates were seldom provided, it was noted that some individuals were able to find out these reasons if they ask for them.

The single superintendent who remarked on skills necessary for the principalship noted that "*numerous specific skills related to management are increasingly necessary.*" The shift from educational to management priorities in the school requires that new principals possess planning and project management skills, human relations skills, and the ability to foster teamwork and collaborative decision making. Moreover, they must also be prepared to evaluate teacher performance. Comments from principals also acknowledged the new environment of accountability, but they focussed more on skills necessary to promote the primary purpose of schooling--the education of children-- within this environment. Strong communication skills and an ability to build relationships were identified as key skills. One principal noted that successful principals must

> *have a belief system that kids come first and [that] parents are our main customers and partners in a successful school.*

Another remarked that

> *working with people in ways which empower and validate them is probably the most important skill a leader can possess.*

In addition to these two skills, principals noted that the demanding nature of the job requires individuals who have a "team-player" attitude, are good negotiators, are master teachers, have public relations expertise, and a strong commitment to public education. Finally, one principal stated that school systems should find people that seek continuous improvement instead of safe political appointments.

Both superintendents and principals noted the importance of training for new principals. A superintendent remarked that "*more important than the actual selection is what happens afterwards.*" He believed that on-the-job-training, coaching, and mentoring the new principal were important for the development of new principals. One principal emphasized the importance of maintaining a high level of currency in educational theory and practice. He noted that many businesses provide for upgrading employees on company time and at company expense, therefore school systems should increase opportunities for professional development with the funding to support these ventures. He concluded by noting that school systems lag behind in their commitment to professional development which is critical to maintaining strong leadership.

With respect to principal placements, two principals and one superintendent maintained that rotating principals from one position to another within the system was desirable practice. Moreover, one principal noted that

> *principals with 'high energy' should go to 'low energy' schools and once they make the necessary changes they should go to a 'plum' school to re-energize before returning to a 'low energy' school again.*

In addition to the six areas which received attention from both groups, principals commented on the importance of the "fit" of the principal to the position. These comments focussed on three different areas. First, one principal noted that

> *the selection of principals should not compromise any of the school community's needs.*

She also emphasized the fact that the personality, expertise, deficiencies, and strengths of the principal are extremely influential in charting the future course for any school. Therefore, it is important to determine student and community needs and select the new principal which best "fits" this profile. Second, principals should "fit" with the administrative team in the school. Individual personalities, strengths, and values should complement the style and philosophy of the selected principal. Inconsistencies which result in disharmony on the administrative team can have a negative affect on the *"school's morale, tone and productivity."* Third, the "fit" with the remainder of the school staff is important. One principal noted that

> *in selecting a principal for a particular school, it is very important to make some key changes to staff personnel at the same time if meaningful change is to occur assuming that change is inevitable.*

A lack of staff compatibility or significant staff resistance to change can impede the process of change.

Specific Research Question 1.d

To what extent are recommendations in the literature regarding the selection of principals reflected in processes used by school systems in the selection of principals?

The study identified a number of practices currently employed by school systems in Alberta. These current practices are now compared with those recommended in the literature. Nine practices identified and discussed in Chapter 2 are outlined below with comments regarding the degree of compliance achieved by school systems.

Develop Written Policies

Only 32 of the 66 systems that participated in the study had approved policies or formal written procedures for the selection of principals. Further, the detail provided in these policies about practices varied markedly. For example, details in a few policies were restricted to the identification of (a) advertising practices, (b) who was involved in short-listing and interviewing candidates, and (c) who was responsible for the selection decision. Other policies provided significantly more detail regarding the practices followed and included a list of criteria used in evaluating candidates. Many systems that did not provided documents in Phase One of the study noted that they were in the process of developing policy or intended to develop policy in the near future.

Three possible purposes for written policies are discussed in Chapter 2. Anderson (1991) believed that written policies serve two purposes. First, they provide evidence to the community, staff, and prospective candidates of the board's commitment to hire the best individuals possible. Second, they outline the goals and objectives the board wish to achieve. Castetter (1996) added a third purpose: the establishment of procedural guidelines from which the administrators responsible for the selection process will operate. The majority of the policies analyzed in the study fulfilled the third purpose. Some policies contained statements of the board's intent to hire good leaders, but very few included the goals the board wished to achieve.

Conduct Intensive Job Analyses

Although the questionnaire did not address this issue, documents provided very little evidence that a job analysis is conducted as part of the pre-selection process. Policy documents from three systems noted that either a job description is developed or the current one is reviewed. Six school systems have incorporated the development of a "school profile" which is updated annually with input from members of the school community. This profile is used extensively in effecting the best match between the school and a prospective principal. A few other systems have used an informal process similar to this.

Create a Pool of Qualified Candidates

While most systems advertise extensively, few actively recruit potential administrators to ensure that future needs will be met. In many systems, advertising is done internally with external advertising initiated only if there is insufficient interest from within the system. This practice assumes the existence of a pool of qualified candidates who may be interested in an administrative opportunity. On the other hand, some larger systems have developed administrator training programs intended to create and maintain an adequate pool of qualified candidates.

Develop Specific Selection Criteria

In the questionnaire returns, 79% of superintendents indicated that their systems have specific criteria which are used in the selection of principals. However, the questionnaire was limited in the amount of detail which could be collected regarding the specificity of criteria used and the degree to which it was communicated to selectors and potential candidates. The analysis of the documents revealed a similar percentage of systems with written criteria. Although 25 of 32 documents included written criteria, these varied in scope and detail. Moreover, very few policies included any discussion of standards of performance in connection with expected competencies. Further, very few systems provided evidence of recognition that desired criteria should be related to the specific school and community setting.

Identify the Specific Opening in Vacancy Announcements

The documents were not specific about how positions were advertised other than noting whether advertising was limited to postings within the system or intended for open competition. However, interviews with superintendents revealed that care is taken to identify the specific school which is in need of a principal. In addition, some systems provided detailed information regarding the size, location, and specific features of the school including budget figures and details on staffing. This information is intended to assist candidates to determine their own interest in and compatibility with the school.

An informal survey of advertisements in a local paper conducted during this study also revealed that school systems usually identify specific openings.

Some systems fill these vacancies internally which creates another vacancy. This has been handled in various ways. At times, the new vacancy is advertised in the same manner that was used with the initial vacancy. This "domino effect" often creates a problem with time and increases recruitment costs. As an alternative, systems have approached individuals who have applied for the advertised position to determine their interest in the new vacancy. In other cases, systems with an established candidate pool have attempted to effect a match from the pool.

Involve a Broad Base of People in Screening and Selection

While many systems provided evidence that they were beginning to involve stakeholders in the selection process, some systems still rely on administrators to short-list, interview, and recommend candidates for board approval. Selection committees described in the questionnaire included a number of stakeholder groups. These committees were more frequently involved in interviewing candidates. Short-listing was still a function predominately performed by administrators. In most cases, administrators, trustees, or a combination of these made the selection decision.

Train Individuals on Selection Committees

Very little information was provided about training for individuals involved in the selection process. One system noted that established criteria were discussed with individuals involved in the selection process to ensure common understandings among selectors. Two other systems indicated that central office staff are responsible to select staff. No mention was made of training provided, although it was inferred that these individuals have specialized expertise.

Use Multiple Means of Assessment

Information collected from the study identified four means of assessment used in evaluating prospective candidates. In spite of weaknesses associated with the use of interviews, they were the assessment tool most frequently used. Limited mention was made of the use of written assignments, the Principal Perceiver, and in-basket exercises.

Consider Varied Sources of Information About Candidates

Data used to evaluate candidates for school principalships are gathered from a variety of sources. In addition to the four potential sources listed in the questionnaire, respondents from both groups added three other sources of information. Two more sources were identified in the documents. In spite of the extensive list catalogued, the majority of systems used limited sources of information. Resumes, letters of application, and verbal references are used most frequently. However, an increasing number of systems are beginning to use school outcomes and principal profiles as additional sources of information. Observing candidates in a social context, visiting work sites, and soliciting statements from colleagues received limited attention.

Summary

This section presents a summary of the major findings regarding selection policies and practices under the same headings as were used throughout the chapter.

Dissemination of Information About Policies

While superintendents and principals reported that policies and practices relating to the selection of principals were extensively communicated throughout their school systems, there was evidence of disagreement between the two groups within selected systems.

In addition, only 32 of 66 school systems participating in the study provided copies of policies or written practices for analysis. While some systems had highly developed processes, many lacked detail regarding procedures and criteria which would be used in the selection process.

Technologies Used in Selection

Thirteen components of the selection process were identified in the analysis of the documents provided in Phase One of the study. However, only five of these were mentioned in more that 50% of the documents: (a) recruiting of candidates, (b) identifying of individuals responsible for the selection decision, (c) using a selection committee, (d) short-listing candidates, and (e) interviewing candidates. Reference checks and action taken following the vacancy announcement were mentioned in 10 of the

32 documents. The other components were identified in eight or fewer of the policies. Five selected components were included in the superintendent questionnaire to determine the frequency of use in school systems in Alberta. Only four of the five were identified by more than 50% of superintendents. These were short-listing candidates, interviewing candidates, collecting relevant data, and checking the accuracy of the data received. In fact, these were mentioned by more than 80 % of superintendents. The fifth, conducting simulated exercises, was mentioned by fewer than 20 % of the superintendents.

The documents frequently indicated that selection committees were used in the selection process. Superintendents also noted in the questionnaire that various stakeholders were involved in short-listing candidates, interviewing candidates, and the selection decision. While stakeholders were represented in all parts of the process, administrators more frequently conducted short-listing of candidates and trustees together with administrators made the selection decision. In some cases, only administrators made the selection decision. However, in 23 systems the board made this decision based on recommendations from either the superintendent or a selection committee. In six of these systems, the board also required either summary information on each candidate or more detailed information. In these instances, although boards are free to act independently of the committee, in most cases the decision to hire was based on the recommendations of a selection committee. Other stakeholders were most frequently involved with interviewing candidates and making recommendations to those with the power to make the decision.

Superintendents and principals ranked a list of possible sources of data used to evaluate candidates. Superintendents noted the importance ascribed to each source by their system, while principals indicated the importance which should be given to each. Superintendents rated references as being most important, with experience, performance in interviews, written reports from supervisors, and letters of application and resumes following in order of importance. The order suggested by principals rated experience as most important, with references, written reports from supervisors, performance in interviews, and letters of application and resumes following in order of importance.

Each group suggested some additional sources of data. These included but were not restricted to portfolios, achievement results, statements from colleagues, and past performance.

Training Individuals Involved in the Selection Practices

Only one of the 32 policy documents referred to any training process. In addition, only 11 of the 63 superintendents responding to the survey indicated that any pre-selection training was done with members of selection committees. In most cases this was limited to a review of criteria which would be used in the process.

Information Provided to Successful Candidates

More than 75% of superintendents and 64% of principals remarked that successful candidates are informed of the reasons for which they were hired. However, only 10 of 60 principals noted that there was full disclosure of this information. Superintendents were not asked to indicate the degree of disclosure. It is assumed that this information would provide new principals with a better understanding of their mandate and some indication of support from the hiring committee.

Preferences Regarding Selection

The majority of school systems indicated that their preference is to hire the best candidate. All systems probably want to hire the best candidate, however some of these systems believe that the "best candidates" for principalships are already employed within the system. Therefore, they restrict recruitment to individuals within the system.

Of the 32 policies provided, 21 noted that positions are advertised both internally and externally. Some of these noted that *"all things being equal"* preference would be given to the internal candidate.

Superintendents and principals from the same systems differed regarding their system's preference about selection. Of the 62 principals in the study, 51 had been hired from within their system.

Satisfaction With the Candidacy Pool

Thirty-four percent of superintendents expressed dissatisfaction with the pool of candidates available for selection. Even some superintendents that noted general satisfaction expressed some degree of concern. The reasons for concern related either to the limited number of qualified candidates or to the general lack of quality among candidates applying for administrative positions.

A number of factors were cited as contributing to this problem. These included (a) the changing nature and demands of the position, (b) the location of the position, (c) lack of preparation, (d) time of year, (e) size of the school, (f) insufficient pay, (g) reluctance to self-initiate a move, (h) age, (i) local issues, and (j) the complexity of the documentation process to qualify and apply for an administrative position. In addition, one respondent noted that recent denigration of administration by government posed a barrier for some.

The time of the year was specified as an issue because of the perceived reluctance of individuals to relocate during a school year. Although not noted in the comments, this reluctance may be attributed to a number of factors both professional and personal. For example, the proximity in time of a relocation to events occurring in the prospective candidate's current assignment may influence the decision to pursue the opportunity or wait for another. Also, the new position could mean a change of residence for the family which would be disruptive during the school year.

The substantial number of superintendents expressing dissatisfaction with the number and quality of candidates applying for positions of leadership in the school is alarming and deserves further consideration.

Preparation for the Principalship

There were differences in opinion regarding the existence of training programs. Significantly more principals than superintendents noted that their system provided pre-selection training for prospective candidates. These differences appear significant until additional attention is given to the origin of the respondents. Of those principals which reported pre-service training in their systems, 22 of 28 were employed in 3 of the 8 systems where superintendents reported training programs. The other six principals were employed by four systems where no training was noted by the superintendent. Other principals in these four systems did not agree that pre-selection training was available.

In contrast, relatively similar numbers of superintendents and principals reported the existence of training for new principals. Similarly, differences in opinion occurred within systems regarding the existence of new principal training programs. It is possible that these differences could be attributed to varying definitions of "training programs."

Circumstances Which May Affect the Selection

While the importance of the match of the principal to the school and the community was overwhelmingly evident in opinions of expressed in the questionnaire, it is disconcerting to note that this approach is rarely addressed in written policies and practices. Several possible contextual variables were identified which could affect the match of the principal to the school, including language, school and community philosophy, culture of the community, mix of staff, and community expectations. The "fit" of the principal to the local situation may be enhanced through the development of comprehensive school and community profiles which could be matched with equally comprehensive applicant profiles.

Other factors which could influence the selection of candidates included the size and location of the school, the type of school, and local politics.

Level of Satisfaction with Current Policy and Practices

Of those completing the questionnaire, 97% of superintendents and 90% of principals were either satisfied or very satisfied with practices used to select principals. Although both superintendents and principals noted a high level of satisfaction with current practices, individuals from each group identified changes which could improve the process.

Superintendents suggested the following changes: (a) increase involvement of stakeholders, (b) provide leadership training for prospective candidates, (c) enlarge the candidate pool, (d) improve the structure and training of the selection committee, (e) expand the scope of the screening process, (f) give more attention to data used in the process, (g) formalize policy, (h) allow more time to the process, (i) make the process more "open," (j) develop standards of performance, and (k) provide more assistance to applicants.

Principals agreed with the first seven changes, (a)-(g), suggested by superintendents and added four others: provide better opportunities for aspiring administrators, examine criteria used, provide feedback to candidates, and give more attention to principal match with the school.

Comparison of Current with Recommended Practices

Generally, in the researcher's opinion, school systems in Alberta did not rate well on the nine recommended practices identified in Chapter 2. Systems rated highly on using specific criteria in selection practices and identifying specific vacancies when advertising for new administrators. Involvement of a broad base of individuals in selection practices and policy development received a moderate rating although practice is improving in both areas. Multiple means of assessment and varied sources of data would be rated moderate to low. The other three areas received a low rating: conducting a job analysis, creating an adequate candidate pool, and training members of selection committees.

Chapter 6

Criteria Used in the Selection of Principals

While Chapter 5 centred on policies and practices used by school systems for the selection of school principals, Chapter 6 focusses on criteria used in the selection of principals in Alberta and the extent to which recommendations in the literature about effectiveness of principals are reflected in these criteria.

Specific Research Question 2.a

What criteria are currently used by school systems in the selection of principals in Alberta?

Policies and practices described in policy documents received in Phase One articulated some criteria used by school systems which provided these documents. In addition, both superintendents and principals identified those criteria which were used in their systems and which criteria they considered to be the most important for use in the selection of principals.

Criteria Identified in the Policy Documents

A summary of criteria contained in policy documents describing policies and practices obtained from 32 systems is provided in Table 6.1. Policies varied in complexity from a few general statements to a number of criteria which were quite detailed. Policy documents from four systems included fewer than five criteria, of which professional preparation and professional experience were the primary criteria mentioned. One notable exception was the system which stated only that the "most suitable" individual would be chosen. Of the eight policy documents that did not include criteria, three noted that criteria would be established by the selection committee prior to initiating the process of selection.

Each criterion in Table 6.1 is a broad descriptor which encompasses a number of specific statements included in individual policy documents. These specific statements are facets of the general categories established for reporting results, however each statement reflects the particular aspect of the general criterion which was

Table 6.1

Frequency Distribution of Criteria Considered to Be Most Important for Use in the Selection of Principals, as Identified in Policy Documents of 24 Systems

Criteria	f	%f
Appropriate professional preparation	23	96
Appropriate previous experience	22	92
Strong leadership capability	19	79
Appropriate job-related skills and knowledge	18	75
Desirable personal characteristics	15	63
High level of previous performance	13	54
Appropriate commitment to school system goals or vision	7	29
Good match to school	1	4
Other	3	13

Notes: 1. Many documents identified various specific criteria in each of the general criteria areas outlined in the table above. However, the frequency distribution reflects only the general criteria area represented by statements in the documents.

2. Because the general criteria listed included a large range of specific criteria, the majority of these criteria are discussed in the text rather than in these notes.

3. Other criteria appeared in documents of three systems and included (a) range of interests--two mentions, and one mention for each of (b) willingness to locate to the community, and (c) willingness to be involved in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

4. No criteria were identified in policy documents of eight systems.

important to the system which developed that policy. While each statement cannot be discussed in detail, a more comprehensive list of these statements is provided below.

Although appropriate professional preparation received the greatest attention in policy, references to this criterion were general in nature. Of the 19 mentions, 15 referred to formal education (e.g., a bachelor's or master's degree), 4 identified evidence of and commitment to ongoing professional development as important for a prospective principal, and the other 4 stated that professional preparation was an important criterion but did not define its nature.

Similarly, references to previous experience provided little detail. Successful teaching and administrative experience were most frequently mentioned as criteria considered in the selection of principals: teaching--eight mentions and administrative experience--seven mentions. In most cases, the quality of the candidates' experience received more attention than did previous experience in either teaching or administration. The remaining seven policy documents included reference to previous experience without identifying the specific nature of the experience desired.

References to leadership in the documents included identification of three different types of leadership: (a) general leadership ability--15 mentions, (b) instructional leadership -- 14 mentions, and (c) spiritual leadership--3 mentions. General leadership ability was further sub-divided. Ten policy documents indicated that the system wanted individuals with demonstrated leadership ability in previous positions, and the other five noted that prospective principals should possess general leadership potential.

Instructional leadership was mentioned in 14 documents in the following manner: (a) curriculum leadership--four mentions, (b) knowledge of current research in pedagogy--four mentions, (c) staff development--three mentions, (d) recognizing and accommodating student needs--two mentions, (e) commitment to the improvement of instruction--two mentions, and one mention for each of (f) proven instructional leadership and (g) development and maintenance of an orderly learning environment. In some cases more than one of these specific criteria were mentioned in documents from one system.

Spiritual leadership was the other specific type of leadership which appeared in the documents submitted by Roman Catholic systems and was to be demonstrated by active involvement in the Church and a commitment to promote the Catholic faith in school programs. A final reference to leadership was vaguely defined as "public presence." No details were given as to the nature or scope of this presence.

Specific criteria included in "job-related skills and knowledge" included both human relations and management skills. A general reference to human relations skills as an important criterion to be considered in the selection of principals was mentioned in documents from 17 school systems. Specific human relations skills identified in other documents included (a) communications skills--14 mentions, (b) team building--7 mentions, (c) collaborative management--2 mentions, (d) collaborative decision-making--2 mentions, and (e) conflict management skills--1 mention. Of the 32 documents, 14 made a general reference to appropriate management skills. Specific management skills that were also noted were (a) organizational skills--10 mentions, (b) decision-making--8 mentions, (c) managing--7 mentions, (d) planning--5 mentions, (e) evaluating--5 mentions, (f) coordinating--3 mentions, (g) problem analysis--2 mentions, and one mention for each of (h) developing vision, (i) managing human resources, (j) financial skills, and (k) organizing and supervising others.

Several personal characteristics which should be considered during selection of principals were also identified in documents provided by school systems. Specific personal characteristics which were mentioned included (a) religious faith (Catholicity)--four mentions, (b) creativity--four mentions, (c) good health--three mentions, (d) commitment to Catholic education--three mentions, (e) dependability--two mentions, (f) tolerance to stress--two mentions, (g) initiative--two mentions, and one mention for each of (h) conceptual ability, (i) commitment,

(j) judgment, (k) honesty, (l) emotional stability, (m) courage, (n) ethical behavior, (o) personality, (p) care for the welfare of children, and (q) energetic.

Previous performance of prospective candidates was cited in documents from 13 school systems as a criterion to be considered during the selection process. While no details were mentioned regarding the type of performance which would be considered, documents emphasized the quality of performance.

The last two general criteria noted in Table 6.1 focus on the "match" of the candidate to the system and the school. Of the 32 documents, 7 included statements about the importance of a potential candidate's commitment to the vision of the school system and system goals. Documents from one system identified the importance of the match of the candidate to a particular school.

Criteria Identified in the Questionnaires

Because only 32 of the 66 systems provided documents relating to the selection of principals in Phase One of the study, it was impossible to determine what proportion of the systems in the province used specific criteria in the selection of principals and which criteria are used. Therefore, these issues were addressed in the questionnaires completed by superintendents and principals.

Superintendents (SQ 6.a & c). Information provided by superintendents addressed specific criteria and the origins of these criteria. Of the 63 superintendents who completed the survey, 48 stated that their system used specific criteria in the selection of principals. Two more superintendents provided a mixed response with an explanation. The first superintendent indicated that, while the system had criteria, these could be more specific. The other superintendent noted that criteria were used, but they were developed by selection committees in preparation for the selection of a principal.

Of the 48 superintendents who indicated that their systems used specific criteria in the selection of principals, 26 were from systems which had provided documents in Phase One. Documents from only 20 of these systems included criteria to be considered in the selection of principals. The other six systems had established criteria separate from the documents.

Two superintendents who noted that their system did not have specific criteria for the selection of principals were from systems whose policies included written criteria. although neither policy provided details regarding specific expectations.

The summary of superintendents' responses about criteria which are considered in the selection of principals is provided in Table 6.2. More than 90% of superintendents identified 7 of the 10 criteria listed in the questionnaire as important to consider when principals were selected: appropriate previous experience, high motivation, high level of previous performance, relevant education, good match to school, good match to community, and appropriate job-related skills and knowledge.

In addition to the 10 criteria listed, several superintendents noted that various personal characteristics were also considered during the selection process. This general criterion was added to the list identified in Table 6.2. Several other aspects that were mentioned have been listed under the appropriate general categories in the table: (a) relevant education-- training (especially administrative); (b) high level of previous performance--Catholicity, involvement in the church, display of Catholic school leadership, team player in district leadership forum, community involvement, action, proven leadership skills; (c) acceptable statement of educational philosophy--vision, commitment to district mission and goals, understanding the Francophone school concept/distinction; (d) appropriate job-related skills and knowledge--ability to make difficult decisions, creative problem solving skills, interpersonal skills, and knowledge and ability to work in a Native community; and (e) personal characteristics--openness to change (adaptability), intuitive sense, maturity of thought, positive attitude, and exemplary Catholic behavior.

Responses from superintendents (SQ 6.b) concerning the origin of these criteria are summarized in Table 6.3. Although committees were most frequently named as being responsible to establish criteria for the

Table 6.2

Frequency Distributions of Consideration of Specific Criteria in the Selection Process, as Identified by Superintendents and Principals (SQ. 6.c:PQ. 3.a)

	Superintendents (N=63)	Principals (N= 62)
Criteria	%f	%f
Appropriate previous experience	98	95
Highly motivated	98	78
High level of previous performance	97	87
Relevant education	95	87
Good match to school	95	83
Good match to community	92	73
Appropriate job-related skills and knowledge	92	75
Pleasing personality	77	78
Acceptable statement of educational philosophy	62	70
Good performance in previous selection interviews in the system	49	45
Personal characteristics	11	0
Other	0	31

Notes:
1. Several personal characteristics were identified by several superintendents, therefore the general category was included as an additional criterion.
2. No criteria were identified by two superintendents.
3. "Other" included (a) high level of performance in a training program--four mentions, (b) appropriate evidence of professional growth--two mentions, and one mention for each of (c) acceptable risk taking, (d) appropriate vision, (e) strong leadership ability, (f) good philosophical match to the interviewing committee, (g) exemplary Catholicity, (h) positive feedback from stakeholders, (i) strong commitment to teaching, (j) acceptable interpersonal skills, (k) strong organizational skills, knowledge and attitudes (SKAs), (l) astute political SKAs, (m) committed change agent, (n) good match to the administrators in the school, and (o) thorough knowledge of the curriculum.

Table 6.3

Frequency Distribution of Origins of Criteria Used in the Selection of Principals, as Identified by Superintendents (SQ. 6.b)

(N= 49)

Source	f	%f
Committees	17	35
Superintendent	14	29
Central office administration	8	16
Superintendent and board	3	6
Senior administration and board	3	6
Principal Perceiver	1	2
Local group	1	2
Selection committee	1	2
Board	1	2

Notes: 1. Committee structures outlined in the responses covered a broad range of possibilities. These included (a) central office administrators, trustees, and stakeholders, (b) central office administrators and stakeholders, (c) central office administrators and principals, (d) trustees, school council and staff representatives, (e) all staff, (f) superintendent's committee, and (g) a system committee.

2. No response was received from 14 superintendents.

selection of principals, superintendents were directly involved in the development of criteria in at least 26 systems with a possibility of their inclusion in the process in most of the other systems. Only three superintendents were not involved. In two systems, a committee composed of board members, the school council, and representatives of the staff had developed the criteria, while in the other system the board retained the right to establish criteria. However, even in these cases, it may be argued that the superintendent would have input as the chief executive officer of the board.

Superintendents were named as the sole source of criteria in eight systems. In three other systems, the superintendent established the criteria for board approval and in three more systems, superintendents considered input from the selection committee before establishing the criteria which would be used. In the remaining instances, superintendents worked collaboratively with various stakeholders to establish criteria to be used for the selection of principals.

Other specific mentions were made of individuals or groups of individuals involved in the establishment of criteria to be used in the selection of school principals: (a) trustees--13 mentions, (b) school staff --10 mentions, (c) central office administration--9 mentions, (d) school council members--6 mentions, (e) principals--4 mentions, (f) deputy or associate superintendent--4 mentions, (g) parents--2 mentions, and one mention each for secretary treasurer, and business community representatives. In addition to these specific mentions, each of these stakeholders may have been involved in establishing criteria as members of undefined committees.

Of the 49 superintendents, 41 stated that establishment of criteria for the purposes of assisting in the selection of principals was the result of the efforts of more that one individual.

Principals (PQ 3.a). A summary of the criteria which principals believed were used in the selection process is compared to superintendents' responses in Table 6.2. More than 80% of these principals identified each of appropriate previous experience, high level of previous performance, relevant education, and good match to school.

The adjectives describing various criteria in Table 6.2 were inadvertently overlooked in the principals' questionnaire but the intent of principals' responses supported their use in the table.

Superintendents cf. principals. While the 62 principals who completed the questionnaire were from only 25 systems, comparison of superintendents' and principals' perceptions assists in determining whether criteria considered by school systems in the selection process were adequately communicated to prospective principals.

The number of mentions of each criterion by superintendents and principals established a ranking of the 10 criteria included in the questionnaire. Of these 10 criteria, 4 were ranked in the same order by both superintendents and principals. Consideration of previous experience received the highest consideration from respondents from each group. Job-related skills and knowledge, an acceptable statement of educational philosophy, and performance in previous selection interviews in the system appeared in the same relative order (i.e., seventh, ninth, and tenth) for both superintendents and principals.

Overall, a higher percentage of superintendents than principals noted that criteria listed in the questionnaire were used in the selection of principals. The principals' and superintendents' ranks and percentages differed markedly on "highly motivated," "good match to the community," and "appropriate job-related skills and knowledge." Of the 63 superintendents, 98% ranked "highly motivated" along with "appropriate previous experience" as the criteria most frequently considered during the selection of principals. In contrast, 78% of principals mentioned "highly motivated" which ranked fifth. "Good match to community" was ranked fifth by superintendents and eighth by principals. with 92% of superintendents and 73% of principals choosing this criterion. Although superintendents and principals gave "appropriate job-related skills and knowledge" the same rank (seventh), 92% of superintendents and 72% of principals noted that this criterion was considered in principal selection. In addition, differences of 12%

and 10% between the frequency of superintendents' and principals' responses appeared for "good match to school" and "high level of previous performance" with superintendents mentioning both of these criteria more frequently than did principals. Percentages of principals' responses were higher for only two of the criteria: acceptable statement of educational philosophy and pleasing personality. No principals expressed an opinion that personal characteristics were considered by their system in the selection of principals.

The mean percentage of superintendents indicating that the first seven criteria (i.e. previous experience, motivation, previous performance, education, match to school, match to community, and job-related skills and knowledge) were considered in the selection of principals was 95.3%. In contrast, the mean percentage of principals expressing opinions that these seven criteria were considered was 82.7%. Overall, the mean percentage of superintendents indicating that the 10 criteria listed in the survey were considered in the selection process was 85.6%. By comparison, the mean percentage of principals' responses to the 10 criteria was 77.1%.

Relative Importance of Criteria Used in Selecting Principals

Superintendents and principals also identified criteria which they believed to be most important for consideration in the selection of principals. While each respondent was asked to identify three criteria, responses ranged from none to a maximum of six criteria. One superintendent mentioned only one criterion, two provided two, and 16 identified more than three criteria. By comparison, four principals provided two criteria and 22 provided more than three criteria. In addition, 13 superintendents and 8 principals mentioned more than one criteria that were related. For the purposes of the study only one criterion from each area and three criteria in total were included in Table 6.4, resulting in 182 superintendents' and 182 principals' responses. The remaining criteria are outlined in the text.

Superintendents (SQ 6.d). "Job-related skills and knowledge" was identified by 82% of superintendents as a criterion frequently

Table 6.4

Frequency Distributions of Criteria Considered to Be Most Important for Use in the Selection of Principals, as Identified by Superintendents and Principals (SQ. 6.d: PQ 3.b)

Criteria	Superintendents (N=62) %f	Principals (N=62) %f
Appropriate job-related skills and knowledge	82	68
Desirable personal characteristics	55	47
High level of previous performance	42	47
Strong leadership capability	31	32
Appropriate previous experience	29	26
Appropriate training	19	24
Good match to school	19	26
Good match to community	8	8
Acceptable educational philosophy	6	16
Good "fit"	2	0
Good match to staff	0	2

Notes: 1. "Appropriate job-related skills and knowledge" noted by superintendents was a composite of a number of specific skills and knowledge which are identified in Table 6.5.

2. "Personal characteristics" mentioned by principals was also a composite of specific criteria which are identified in Table 6.6.

3. One superintendent did not provide any response.

considered by school systems in the selection of principals. These skills were further divided into management and human relations skills which are summarized in Table 6.5. While organizational or management skills were acknowledged as important, human relations skills were mentioned most frequently as skills which prospective candidates should possess.

Superintendents ranked "desirable personal characteristics" as the second most important criterion. In addition to six general references to "desirable personal characteristics," several individual characteristics were cited by superintendents: (a) high motivation--nine mentions, (b) commitment of prospective candidates--five mentions (two references to a commitment to Catholic education), (c) personality--two mentions, (d) faith (Catholicism)--two mentions, (e) vision--two mentions, and one mention for each of (f) integrity, (g) work ethic, (h) positive attitude, (i) honesty, (j) a student focus, (k) high energy, (l) scholarliness, and (m) personal stability.

References to previous performance were relatively general in nature. Of the 26 mentions of previous performance, 6 referred only to the fact that previous performance was important and 18 specifically referred to the quality of that performance. For example, one superintendent stated that the *"best predictor of future success is past success."* Two superintendents identified specific areas in which past performance was critical: the practice of Catholic education and an *"ability to meet identified student, staff, and community needs."*

Leadership ability was fairly equally divided between general leadership ability and instructional leadership which included evidence of expertise with the curriculum and *"an understanding of all aspects relating to student achievement."*

Of the 18 superintendents who noted the importance of appropriate previous experience, 7 mentioned only that previous experience was necessary. Nine other superintendents remarked that experience related to the position to be filled was important for consideration in the process of selection and one of these added that the experience gained should have been *"successful."* In addition, one

Table 6.5

Frequency Distributions of Job-related Skills and Knowledge Identified as Important for Consideration in the Selection Process, as Identified by Superintendents (SQ. 6.d)
(N= 51)

Specific criteria	f	%f
Human relations skills	25	40
General mention of skills and knowledge	15	24
Management skills	11	18

Notes: 1. In addition to 16 general references to human relations skills, superintendents identified communication skills--four mentions, team building--four mentions, and conflict management--one mention.

2. Management skills included (a) decision-making--two mentions, (b) organizational skills--two mentions, and one mention for each of (c) planning, (d) business acumen, (e) leading change, and (f) risk taking. In addition, three superintendents made a general reference to management skills.

superintendent identified *"successful teaching"* as a necessary prerequisite for consideration for an administrative position. These comments and the relative ranking of previous experience to previous performance reinforced superintendents' comments that the quality of experience is more important than experience alone.

While 19% of superintendents stated that preservice training was an important criterion to be considered, no details were given regarding the type of training which was required. Two additional references to professional preparation were made in addition to the three criteria requested.

References to the match to the school, match to the community, and an acceptable educational philosophy were general in nature.

In addition to those criteria included in the table, superintendents identified 42 specific criteria which were either in addition to the three requested in the questionnaire or references to another aspect of a criterion already mentioned. These specific criteria were associated with the following criteria identified in the table: (a) desirable personal characteristics--20 mentions, (b) appropriate job-related skills and knowledge--9 mentions, (c) strong leadership capability--3 mentions, (d) appropriate previous experience--3 mentions, (e) good match to community--3 mentions, (f) high level of previous performance--2 mentions, and (g) appropriate training--2 mentions.

Principals (PQ 3.b). Principals also identified criteria which they believed were most important for consideration in the selection of principals. These responses are summarized in Table 6.4.

Of the 62 principals who completed the questionnaire, 42 identified "job-related skills and knowledge" as an important criterion to consider when selecting principals. These mentions of skills were further divided as follow: (a) general reference to job-related skills and knowledge--21 mentions, (b) human relations skills--16 mentions, and (c) management skills-- 5 mentions. Human relations skills included reference to communications skills--five mentions, general human relations skills--four mentions, team building--four mentions, and one mention each for an ability to build relationships, an ability to create a participative culture, and an ability to work with the staff in the school. Management skills included one mention for each of general management skills, organizational skills, working with policies, problem solving skills, and knowledge of politics relating to education.

Desirable personal characteristics and a high level of previous performance received a similar level of support from principals. Of 29 mentions of a high level of previous performance, 23 were general mentions of this criterion. The other six mentions included competence --three mentions, and one mention for each of demonstrated excellence, continued professional growth, innovativeness in programming, and keeping a portfolio. In addition to two general references to personal characteristics, a total of 12 specific characteristics were identified as important for consideration in the selection process. A summary of specific personal characteristics is outlined in Table 6.6. Of the 12 specific characteristics cited by principals, pleasing personality and high motivation received the most mentions. A well-defined vision was described in various terms: *"systematic vision or thinking,"* *"a vision of what education should be in the district,"* and a *"vision toward continual improvement."* Few details were given regarding the other specific characteristics, with the exception of health which is included in the notes to the table.

Of the 20 mentions of leadership capability, 7 were general mentions of leadership ability and 5 were mentions of instructional leadership. The remaining eight mentions included references to specific aspects of instructional leadership: excellent knowledge of the curriculum--four mentions, and one mention for each of knowledge of staff development, "servant leadership," provision of direction for the school, and a "willingness/capacity to advocate with courage."

Appropriate previous experience and a good match to the school ranked next in importance. Responses by principals to these two criteria as well as to appropriate training, educational philosophy and the match of the principal to the community were limited to naming

Table 6.6

Frequency Distributions of Personal Characteristics Stated as Important for Consideration in the Selection Process, as Identified by Principals (PQ. 3.b)
(N= 62)

Specific criteria	f	%f
Pleasing personality	5	8
High motivation	4	6
Well-defined vision	3	5
Strong commitment	3	5
Good health and stamina	3	5
Positive attitude	2	3
Positive role model	2	3
Other	7	11

Notes: 1. Reference to good health and stamina as necessary personal characteristics included mention of the necessity to be a "tireless worker" and the ability to function under stress.

2. Being a role model included perceptions of the principal as an effective teacher and a continuous learner.

3. The "other" category included one mention for each of (a) integrity, (b) work ethic, (c) character, (d) risk-taker, and (e) adaptable. There were two general mentions of personal characteristics.

these particular criteria. No detailed comments were available for any of these.

In addition to those criteria included in the table, principals identified 35 specific criteria which were either in addition to the three requested in the questionnaire or references to another aspect of a criterion already mentioned. These specific criteria were associated with the following criteria identified in the table: (a) appropriate job-related skills and knowledge--nine mentions, (b) desirable personal characteristics--eight mentions, (c) strong leadership capability--six mentions, (d) good match to the community--five mentions, (e) appropriate previous experience--two mentions, (f) high level of previous performance--two mentions, (g) appropriate training--two mentions, (h) acceptable educational philosophy--2 mentions, and (f) good match to school--one mention.

Superintendents cf. principals. Although similarities between superintendents' and principals' responses were evident, some marked differences existed. Principals identified nine criteria which superintendents noted should be considered in the selection of principals. A ranking of these nine criteria by the numbers of mentions by superintendents and principals reveals that the five most frequently mentioned by both groups appear in the same order: appropriate job-related skills and knowledge, desirable personal characteristics, high level of previous performance, strong leadership capability, and appropriate previous experience. Although these criteria appeared in the same order, the percentage of support for job-related skills and knowledge varied substantially. Of the 62 superintendents, 82% remarked that this criterion should be considered, while only 68% of principals did. The differences in percentages of support for the other four criteria varied from 1% to 8%. The superintendents' mean for these five criteria was 48%, and the principals' mean was 44%. While 19% of superintendents mentioned appropriate training and good match to school, a higher percentage of principals mentioned both criteria. Of the last two criteria common to both groups, good match to community was mentioned by 8% of superintendents and principals. In contrast, an acceptable educational philosophy was considered important by 10% more principals than superintendents. Overall a higher percentage of principals than superintendents identified five criteria and one received equal mentions from both groups. The superintendents' mean for all nine criteria common to both groups was 32.33% and the principals' mean was 32.67%.

Education Requirements for the Principalship (SQ 9)

Copies of documents provided by school systems in Phase One of the study frequently referred to professional preparation but few details were provided. Superintendents who completed the questionnaire specified their systems' educational requirements for prospective candidates. A summary of superintendents' responses is provided in Table 6.7.

Of 63 superintendents who completed the questionnaire, 51 noted that their systems either require (21) or prefer (30) some graduate training. The level of graduate training required ranged from one year to the completion of a master's degree.

Attitudes regarding advanced formal education as a prerequisite qualification for a principal's position ranged from *"imperative"* to *"not too relevant."* In most cases, superintendents indicated that school systems considered graduate training as a requirement or at least a desirable asset for the position of principal. This attitude can best be summarized in the comments of one superintendent who said that

> *ongoing education is strongly encouraged and recognized as enhancing knowledge, skills, and attitudes.*

Involvement in a graduate program was also considered an indication of *"commitment to the profession of educational administration."* In contrast, some superintendents observed that while graduate training may be considered an asset it could be replaced by experience.

While several superintendents maintained that their systems preferred candidates with a master's degree, some noted that local circumstances affected adherence to that preference. One

Table 6.7

Frequency Distributions of Policy Requirements of School Systems Regarding Graduate Education as a Prerequisite for Employment as a Principal, as Identified by Superintendents (SQ. 9)

(N= 62)

Policy requirements	f	%f
Graduate education required	21	34
MEd	*12*	*19*
MEd or study toward an MEd	*7*	*11*
Graduate study (undefined)	*2*	*3*
Graduate education is not required	41	66
MEd is preferred	*19*	*29*
Graduate study (undefined) is preferred	*11*	*18*
Not a prerequisite	*7*	*11*
Graduate study is encouraged	*2*	*3*
Not required but many are working toward a degree or diploma	*1*	*2*
Not too relevant	*1*	*2*

Note: No response was received from one superintendent.

superintendent remarked:

> *We would prefer to have candidates with master's degrees in education, unfortunately, because of difficulties associated with isolation and small schools we frequently have to settle for less.*

Another noted that a master's degree was *"not a prerequisite and it might be a handicap,"* although no circumstances were cited which would make graduate training a handicap. It was obvious from responses that school systems with small isolated communities may have difficulties filling a vacancy if graduate training were a specific requirement.

Other superintendents indicated that their school systems had no definite policies regarding graduate training as a prerequisite for candidacy as a principal, although training was encouraged. One superintendent remarked that all internal candidates in their system were encouraged to further their training. Another superintendent noted that, while graduate training was not a policy prerequisite, it was becoming an *"unofficial expectation."* At least one superintendent observed that the decision regarding the importance of graduate training as a qualification for prospective principal candidates was left to each school council.

Specific Research Question 2.b

To what extent are recommendations in the literature about effectiveness of principals reflected in criteria used by school systems in the selection of principals?

Researchers identified in Chapter 2 have discussed several characteristics which tend to permeate the literature. While terms vary with the writer, effective principals tend to receive a high rating on variables that relate to organizational tasks, instructional leadership, and concern for relationships. Variables discussed in the literature focus on 10 effective principal behaviors: (a) provision of instructional leadership, (b) communication with a wide range of publics, (c) coordination of stakeholders to facilitate policy development and goal achievement, (d) improvement of teacher performance, (e) effectiveness in decision-making, (f) commitment to the development, communication, and attainment of school goals, (g) concern for morale and job satisfaction of staff, (h) high expectations for instructional effectiveness, (i) assessment of achievement, and (j) acquisition and management of resources.

A wide range of specific criteria was identified in the documents and superintendents' and principals' responses to the questionnaire, but only 13 could be directly linked to the first 6 of the 10 effective principal behaviors cited above. These six behaviors are discussed according to (a) numbers of criteria which can be related to them, (b) the numbers of mentions for each criterion, and (c) their representation by mentions in the documents and by superintendents and principals. Principals' responses are restricted to those criteria which they believe are currently being used in their school systems.

Three criteria relating to the "provision of instructional leadership," "improvement of teacher performance." and "commitment to the development, communication, and attainment of school goals" appeared in the documents and responses from both superintendents and principals. Criteria related to the "provision of instructional leadership" include: instructional leadership--44 mentions, demonstrated leadership--10 mentions, and potential leadership--5 mentions. Criteria related to the "improvement of teacher performance" were "evaluating staff," "commitment to instructional performance," and "staff development." These criteria were cited in the documents a total of 10 times. "Developing vision," "goal setting," and "planning" were the three criteria related to "commitment to the development, communication, and attainment of school goals." These three criteria were mentioned four times in the documents and by superintendents.

"Coordination of stakeholders to facilitate policy development and goal achievement" was addressed by two criteria, "team building" and "participatory democracy," which were mentioned 20 times in the documents and responses from both groups. A single criterion, "communication skills" which can be directly linked to "communication with a wide range of publics" was identified in the documents and responses from both superintendents and principals a total of 23 times. Similarly, one criterion, "decision-making," which relates to "effectiveness in decision-making" appeared in the documents eight times and was identified by only one superintendent.

In addition to the 10 effective principal behaviors, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (1991) has developed a list of characteristics, skills, and competencies which prospective candidates should exhibit: problem analysis, stress tolerance, judgment, oral communication, written communication, organizational ability, decisiveness, range of interests, leadership, personal motivation, sensitivity, and educational values. Criteria mentioned in policy documents and responses of superintendents and principals addressed 11 of the 12 skill areas and attributes identified by the NASSP. However, only 11 criteria of those listed could be directly linked to these skills and attributes. In addition, frequency of mentions ranged from 2 to 59. The only attribute not readily identified was sensitivity. The attribute most frequently mentioned was leadership. Both superintendents and principals rated high motivation as a criterion used in consideration of candidates for positions as principals in their systems.

However, it was not possible to conclude that evidence from effective principals' research was ignored in the selection of principals. That is, the stated criteria may not be the operational criteria. For example, previous experience and a high level of previous performance may be related if they demonstrate evidence of the behaviors, skills, and attributes identified above. Further, an acceptable educational philosophy may be linked to desirable principal's skills and attributes if this philosophy includes educational values which will lead to effective performance. Also, a connection between a good match to school and effective behaviors may exist if the concept of match includes an understanding that the principal should encourage, involve, and support staff, and work to improve staff job satisfaction.

Summary

This section presents a summary of the major findings regarding policies and practices using the same sequence as was used throughout the chapter.

Only 32 of 66 school systems which participated in the study provided copies of policies and written practices for analysis. Criteria which were listed in the documents varied from a few words identifying a specific criterion to detailed descriptions regarding the skills or abilities that were expected. Appropriate professional preparation and appropriate previous experience were the two most frequently mentioned criteria.

The document analysis provided evidence that not all policies included information regarding criteria which may be considered in the selection process. In addition, where criteria were mentioned many were not well defined.

In the questionnaires, most superintendents indicated that their systems used specific criteria in the selection of principals. While superintendents in some systems developed criteria which were used in the selection process, in most cases criteria were established by committees of stakeholders.

Responses from superintendents and principals demonstrated that there was general agreement in both groups regarding criteria used in the selection of principals by their school systems. More important was the level of agreement between both groups regarding criteria which should be considered when selecting principals.

However, the lack of specificity in defining criteria allowed for a wide range of perceptual differences regarding the scope and exact focus of individual criteria. For example, "job-related skills and knowledge" can and does cover a range of undefined and important skills. While the employer may focus on vision and skills related to planning and implementation of school goals, the individual principal may be more interested in acquiring and allocating resources. The general wording of criteria in individual responses to the superintendents' and principals' questionnaires was influenced by the general nature of the criteria listed in an earlier part of each question. In many cases the same wording was used by both groups. It was not clear from the data collected whether an opportunity was provided for members of selection committees to clarify the specific intent of each criteria.

While the majority of superintendents stated that their systems either required or preferred candidates to have some graduate training, only 34% indicated that it was a requirement. In many cases, local circumstances influenced decisions regarding the importance of graduate training as a criterion to be considered.

Although some criteria mentioned in policy and in responses to the questionnaire could be related directly to behaviors of effective principals as identified in the literature, most related to role descriptions for the position of principal.

Chapter 7

Practices Used in the Evaluation of Principals

Chapter 7 addresses Specific Research Question 3 which deals with these matters: (a) the current evaluation policies and practices in Alberta, (b) the effects of contextual variables on these policies and practices, (c) the perceived connection between evaluation and principal effectiveness, (d) the extent to which superintendents and principals are satisfied with evaluation policies and practices, and (e) the extent to which recommendations in the literature are reflected in these policies and practices.

Specific Research Question 3.a

What policies and practices relating to the evaluation of principals are currently used in Alberta?

Dissemination of Information About Policies (SQ 14: PQ 10)

As noted earlier, 41 school systems submitted policy documents which were either currently in use or very close to adoption. Information about the extent to which policies and practices concerning the evaluation of principals were communicated throughout school systems is provided in Table 7.1.

The majority of respondents in both groups--superintendents and principals--indicated that evaluation policies and practices were communicated either extensively or selectively within their school systems. However, six principals noted that no attempt was made to communicate policies and practices in their system. Two of these were from systems where the superintendent had stated that policies and practices were extensively communicated, while the other four principals were from systems in which selective communication was reported by the superintendent.

Although the number of individuals in both groups which indicated that communication was extensive or selective was similar, a comparison of perceptions of principals and superintendents in the same systems could be instructive. As mentioned earlier, the 62 principals who completed the questionnaire were employed by 25 school systems.

Table 7.1

Frequency Distributions of the Degree to Which Policies and Practices Concerning the Evaluation of Principals Are Communicated Within School Systems, as Reported by Superintendents and Principals (SQ. 14; PQ 10)

Degree	Superintendents (N= 59)		Principals (N=62)	
	f	%f	f	%f
Extensively	35	59	36	58
Selectively	24	41	20	32
Not at all	0	0	6	10

Note: No response was received four superintendents.

Superintendents from 16 of these systems remarked that evaluation policies and practices were communicated extensively in their systems. Of the nine remaining systems, eight superintendents reported selective communication and one did not respond.

In 10 of the 25 systems, there was complete agreement between superintendents' and principals' perceptions regarding the extent to which policies and practices had been communicated. Superintendents and all 29 principals from 9 of these systems reported extensive communication. The superintendent and the only principal in the study from the other system reported selective communication of policies and practices. In 8 systems that employed 11 principals, there was no agreement between the superintendents' and principals' perceptions. Superintendents from five of these eight systems said that information about evaluation policies and practices was extensively communicated.

One principal in a system where the degree of communication was not reported by the superintendent indicated that evaluation policies and practices were communicated selectively.

In the remaining six systems, 20 principals had varying perceptions of the extent to which this information was communicated: (a) extensive communication--4 principals, (b) selective communication--12 principals, and (c) no communication--4 principals. Superintendents from two of these six systems reported extensive communication, while the other four stated that communication of policies and practices in their system was selective.

Purposes for Evaluation

Information in this section was collected from the analysis of policy documents received from school systems and responses in the questionnaires completed by superintendents and principals.

Purposes noted in policy documents. The document analysis revealed that statements about purposes of evaluation were included in evaluation documents from 31 of 41 school systems. A summary of these purposes appears in Table 7.2.

Of these 31 systems, 26 identified promotion of professional

Table 7.2

Frequency Distribution of Purposes for Evaluation, as Reported in School System Policy Documents
(N= 31)

Purpose	f	%f
Promote professional growth and improvement of principals	26	84
Provide information for administrative decisions	24	77
Clarify and communicate role expectations	14	45
Assess the extent to which expectations are being met	8	26
Provide evidence for special recognition	8	26
Identify areas for professional development	7	23
Improve student performance	6	19
Provide public accountability	3	10
Identify appropriate criteria and standards for evaluation	2	6
Other	18	58

Notes:
1. The number of purposes listed by each system ranged from one to seven. The mean number of purposes stated by each system was 3.77.
2. It was assumed that the frequencies of mention identify the relative importance of each of these purposes.
3. "Other" included (a) identify strengths and weaknesses with no mention of purpose--nine mentions (b) assist principals to assess their own performance critically--seven mentions, (c) provide feedback on performance with no mention of purpose--three mentions, (d) promote school improvement--three mentions, and one mention for each of (e) ensure the Catholicity in the school, and (f) assure good employee/employer relations.
4. No purposes were stated in 10 of the policy documents.

growth and improvement of principals as a primary purpose for evaluation. Although most systems provided little information about how improvement would be achieved, only a few included some detail about how this would be addressed. For example, one system noted that the purpose of evaluation was to "provide a framework for professional growth and leadership" and "promote, achieve, and maintain a high standard of administrator performance." In order to achieve this purpose the system had a commitment to provide principals with direction and assistance.

A second major purpose of evaluation identified in the policy documents was to provide information to facilitate administrative decisions. While 24 of 31 school systems identified this purpose, few noted the specific decisions which could be affected. Documents from four systems indicated that decisions regarding tenure, promotion, transfer, and termination of designation would be based on information collected during the evaluation process.

Each of the remaining purposes noted in Table 7.2 were identified by 14 or fewer school systems. The amount of detail provided in the policy documents for each of these purposes varied significantly. For example, "personal growth" was cited as a purpose for evaluation in one policy. In contrast, another noted that the purpose of evaluation was to "assess performance in line with system philosophy, standards, and objectives." In most cases, however, statements about purposes of evaluation were relatively general in nature.

In addition to the purposes noted above, "identification of principal strengths and weaknesses" was mentioned in nine of the documents. However, none of the nine policy documents noted a reason for identifying these characteristics. Similarly, "providing feedback on performance" was mentioned three times with no indication of how the feedback would be used.

Purposes identified in the questionnaires. Superintendents and principals rated the relative importance of designated purposes for evaluation listed in the questionnaire. Ratings of from both superintendents and principals varied markedly for each purpose listed in the questionnaire, therefore the mean importance for each was calculated to facilitate the discussion which follows. Respondents from each group also added other purposes and rated them.

Superintendents (SQ 15). A summary of the responses provided by all superintendents appears in Table 7.3. Of 10 purposes listed, the means of importance for 2 purposes related to the improvement of principal performance ranked first and fourth. "Promote professional growth and improvement of principals" received the highest ranking calculated from ratings of superintendents who completed the questionnaire. The means of importance of purposes related to the achievement of organizational goals were ranked second, third, fifth, sixth, and seventh. Superintendents' means for "assess the extent to which expectations are being met" and "clarify and communicate role expectations" ranked higher than means for purposes related to student outcomes, identification of appropriate criteria, and public accountability. For example, one superintendent commented

> *student performance is very important but we are also conscious of developing all aspects of students.*

Means of importance for purposes related to the implementation of personnel actions (e.g., promotion, termination of administrative designation, and special recognition) received the lowest rankings from superintendents.

Principals (PQ 12). Table 7.4 provides a summary of the principals' ratings of designated purposes for evaluation of principals which were included in the questionnaire. The means of importance calculated for principals on three of five purposes related to the achievement of organizational goals ranked first, second, and third in the list of 10 purposes. "Assess the extent to which expectations are being met" was rated highest by the majority of principals. Means of importance for the other two purposes ranked sixth and seventh. For purposes related to the improvement of principal performance, the means calculated for principals ranked fourth and fifth. Some principals were

Table 7.3

Frequency Distribution of the Relative Importance of Purposes for Evaluating Principals, as Reported by Superintendents (SQ. 15)
(N= 63)

Purpose	Importance					
	No 0	Slight 1	Mod. 2	High 3	Mean importance	Not rated
Promote professional growth and improvement of principals	0	0	10	52	2.83	1
Assess the extent to which expectations are being met	0	0	11	51	2.82	1
Clarify and communicate role expectations	0	1	22	39	2.61	1
Identify areas for professional development	0	3	20	39	2.58	1
Improve student performance	0	7	21	34	2.44	1
Identify appropriate criteria and standards for evaluation	2	7	26	25	2.30	3
Provide public accountability	2	7	29	23	2.21	1
Provide information for promotion	5	12	28	15	1.88	3
Provide evidence for termination of administrative designation	3	21	26	12	1.76	1
Provide evidence for special recognition	6	16	25	12	1.73	4
Other	0	0	2	3	na	na

Notes: 1. Four purposes were rated 2.5 and two were rated 0.5. These have been rounded up to 3 and 1 respectively to clarify the presentation.
2. Included in the "other" category were (a) provide evidence for an extension of term contracts, (b) provide data to assist in the development of growth plans, (c) promote a goal-oriented approach to the job, (d) improve instructional leadership, and (e) encourage individuals to be team players.

Table 7.4

Frequency Distribution of the Relative Importance of Purposes for Evaluating Principals, as Reported by Principals (PQ. 12)
(N= 62)

Purpose	Importance						
	No 0	Slight 1	Mod. 2	High 3	Mean importance	Don't know	Not rated
Assess the extent to which expectations are being met	1	5	25	27	2.34	0	4
Improve student performance	2	11	14	33	2.30	0	2
Provide public accountability	2	8	24	26	2.23	0	2
Promote professional growth and improvement of principals	6	9	12	33	2.18	0	2
Identify areas for professional development	3	13	18	26	2.12	0	2
Clarify and communicate role expectations	3	9	29	19	2.07	0	2
Identify appropriate criteria and standards for evaluation	5	14	23	16	1.86	0	4
Provide evidence for termination of administrative designation	9	18	12	15	1.61	4	4
Provide information for promotion	12	17	19	8	1.41	1	5
Provide evidence for special recognition	25	13	16	5	1.03	0	3
Other	0	0	1	5	na	na	na

Notes: 1. Two purposes received ratings of 2.5, one 1.5, and one 0.5. These have been rounded up to 3, 2, and 1 respectively to clarify the presentation.

2. Included in the "other" category were (a) provide summative evaluations of initiatives, (b) initiate threat of termination, (c) identify innovation and measures and standards of improvement, (d) acknowledge good practice, (e) renew contracts, (f) promote self-evaluation, and (g) provide collegial professional development with other principals mentoring.

very skeptical of viewing evaluation as a means of promoting professional improvement. For example, one principal commented

> *I believe evaluation is a "cover your butt" exercise and I don't believe it's done with any view to promote professionalism at all.*

The means of importance for purposes related to the implementation of personnel actions ranked lowest among the 10 purposes listed.

Superintendents cf. principals. With the exception of "provide information for public accountability," the means for the superintendents' ratings of each of the 10 purposes for evaluation was higher than principals' means. While the principals' mean for public accountability was higher, the difference in the mean importance calculated for each group was not substantial. Similarly, the difference in mean importance calculated on two other purposes was 0.15 or less: (a) "to improve student performance," and (b) "to provide evidence for possible termination of administrative designation." The difference in the mean importance of each of the remaining seven purposes ranged from 0.44 to 0.70.

The principals' mean for "improving student performance" was the second highest of the major purposes for evaluation. In contrast, superintendents' mean was the fifth highest in importance. However, the difference in mean importance calculated for superintendents and principals was only 0.14.

The greatest difference in the importance attached to a single purpose for evaluation was for "providing evidence for special recognition." While both superintendents and principals ranked it tenth in importance, the difference in the mean importance was 0.70.

Ranking for "promoting professional growth and the improvement of principals" by superintendents and principals resulted in the second largest difference in mean importance. Although superintendents ranked this purpose first, principals ranked growth and improvement fourth in importance, with a difference in the mean importance calculated for each group of 0.65.

Principals' Involvement in Planning Evaluations (SQ 16: PQ 13)

Superintendents' and principals' responses about principals' involvement in five activities related to principal evaluations is summarized in Tables 7.5. Respondents from each group added other activities related to principal evaluation in which principals were involved. For each activity, fewer principals reported involvement in planning activities in their systems than was noted by superintendents. Reported involvement of principals in "establishing criteria for their own evaluation" and "deciding on time lines for their own evaluation" differed markedly between superintendents and principals.

Approaches to Evaluation (SI 7: PI 4)

Three approaches to evaluation were discussed in Chapter 2: results-based, fulfilment of role description, and evidence of "best practice." During the interviews in Phase Three, superintendents and principals described their perceptions of the approach used in their systems. Of the 10 individuals interviewed, 4 indicated that their systems used more than one approach to the evaluation of principals. Of the five superintendents, two noted the use of two approaches, while two of five principals stated that their systems used all three approaches to evaluation. The frequency of mentions for approaches identified was as follows: (a) results-based--4 mentions, (b) role description-based--6 mentions, and (c) "best practice"-based--6 mentions. However, when the interviewees discussed the processes used in their systems, five described a results-based approach, four described role description-based procedures, and seven discussed "best practices." For example one principal noted

> *At the moment, the a focus on "best practices" is prominent. The administration is looking to find out what is effective in your school. Every school is so different that if you didn't look at evaluation on an individual school basis, it would be like trying to compare apples to oranges. While there are some similarities in expectations, those expectations regarding programming, budgeting, and staff are unique to each school.*

Table 7.5

Frequency Distributions of Involvement of Principals in Various Activities Relating to Their Performance Evaluations, as Reported by 63 Superintendents and 62 Principals (SQ. 16: PQ 13)

Activity	Yes		Undecided		No response	
	S	P	S	P	S	P
	%f	%f	f	f	f	f
Input in development of policy about evaluation of principals	100	85	0	0	1	2
Establishing criteria for their own evaluation	83	57	1	0	2	2
Deciding on time lines for their own evaluation	78	40	1	1	2	4
Deciding on who provides information for their own evaluation	59	43	0	3	4	5
Selecting their own evaluator	18	16	0	2	2	3

Notes: 1. Other activities in which superintendents indicated that principals had input included (a) input into procedures--three mentions: and one mention for each of (b) providing portfolios, and (c) selecting a mentor.

2. Other activities in which principals stated they had input included identifying the process, and identifying what constituted credible evidence. Each was mentioned once.

3. "Undecided" and "No response" were not included in the calculation of percentages.

One superintendent and one principal emphasized strongly the importance of results-based evaluations, although the principal added that principals had developed a list of "desired" behaviors which principals should model. Another superintendent stressed the importance of results, but added that these must be framed in a broader context of effective leadership. Three superintendents and three principals identified the use of role description-based evaluation, however, descriptions of practices in two of these systems included an emphasis on results. In two more systems, interviewees also emphasized a focus on "best practice." Only two principals named and described evaluation based on "best practice" as the sole approach used in their systems.

Role of Self-evaluations in the Evaluation Process (SI 13: PI 8)

All five superintendents that were interviewed indicated that self-evaluations play an important part in the evaluation process. The comments of one superintendent summarizes the primary function of self-evaluations in these systems:

> *If we are trying to foster the concept that children should be continuous learners, and teachers should continually strive to improve their performance by becoming critical self-appraisers, then principals should model this behavior and be continuous learners as well.*

Three of the five principals interviewed observed that their systems use self-evaluations as part of professional development for principals. One noted that information from self-evaluations is used in the discussion between principals and their evaluators during the process. The other principal could not recall whether they were officially mentioned.

Components Used in Evaluating Principals

During the analysis of policies and procedures in documents provided by schools systems, various components of the evaluation process were identified. In addition, superintendents and principals selected aspects used in their systems from a list provided in the questionnaire.

Components identified in the policy documents. Five five major components of the evaluation process identified in the policy documents are summarized in Table 7.6.

Details concerning appeal procedures identified in the documents varied markedly about who should receive the appeal, what could be appealed, and what further actions could be expected. Documents from six systems stated that appeals should be addressed to the superintendent. A similar number of systems indicated that the appeal should be directed to the board, while 11 noted that appeals to both the superintendent and the board were appropriate. In one system the appeal was to be directed to a committee established by the board. Two school systems had policies which declared that only recommendations in the evaluation could be appealed to the board. However, one policy observed that both the content and process of the evaluation could be appealed to the board. Further, 14 of the policy documents noted that an appeal could result in a second evaluation. Most of these policies stated that the second evaluator would have no access to the data collected for the first evaluation.

The means used to inform principals of practices and criteria which would be employed in the evaluation also varied. Of 28 policy documents which identified means of advising principals, seven stated that the document itself was the medium for supplying information to principals, six that the superintendent was responsible for apprising principals of the criteria and process to be used, one that the criteria were outlined in the role description for the principal, and six that principals should be advised of both the criteria and process but they did not define the means to be used to accomplish this. The remaining documents noted that principals were involved in (a) establishing policy defining both criteria and practices to be used, (b) joint-establishment of the criteria and practices for a specific evaluation, (c) joint-establishment of practices only, or (d) determining the priorities or focus of the evaluation. Documents from one system revealed that the principal had the right to decide on the process to be used for the

Table 7.6

Frequency Distribution of Components of the Process Used in the Evaluation of Principals, as Reported in Policy Documents
(N= 41)

Process	f	%f
Establishing appeal procedures	32	78
Communicating criteria and processes to be used	28	68
Collecting data	27	66
Setting conference schedules	27	66
Writing reports	24	59
Developing an atmosphere of trust	18	44

evaluation.

Four primary methods of data collection appeared in policy documents. Direct observation was the most common method of collecting data and was mentioned in 13 of the policies. Both stakeholder surveys and interviews with principals were identified in 12 policies. An analysis of documents (e.g., annual reports, student results, financial documents) was noted in 10 policies. In addition, 9 school systems indicated that "multiple sources" of information would form the basis of the evaluation of the principal, however in none of these documents were these sources identified.

Of the 41 documents supplied by school systems, 15 mentioned the use of pre-evaluation conferences with principals. The primary functions of these conferences were to review the criteria and process to be used during the evaluation, to establish time lines, and to decide on what sources of information would be used as part of the process. Interim conferences usually took the form of a "data collecting" exercise and were mentioned in 9 policies. Of the 27 policies that commented on conferences with principals as part of the evaluation process, 22 referred to the post-conference when draft results of the evaluation are discussed with the principal.

A final written report of the evaluation results was mentioned in 24 of 41 policy documents. Of these 24, 19 indicated that the report would be discussed with the principal and 11 noted that the principal had the right to respond. Only nine policies stipulated deadlines for the preparation of the written report.

Components identified in the questionnaires (SQ 17:PQ 18). A summary of aspects of evaluation identified by superintendents and principals as being used in their systems appears in Table 7.7. In addition to choosing from a list of 10 aspects provided in the questionnaire, respondents added other aspects unique to their system.

For six aspects, a higher percentage of superintendents than principals noted that the particular aspect was considered in the evaluation of principals. While the difference between superintendents'

Table 7.7

Frequency Distribution of Various Aspects Used or Considered by School Systems When Principals Are Being Formally Evaluated, as Reported by Superintendents and Principals (SQ. 17; PQ. 18)

Aspect	Superintendents (N= 62)		Principals (N= 57)	
	f	%f	f	%f
Staff surveys	44	71	42	72
Student surveys	40	65	39	67
Parent surveys	43	69	43	74
Student achievement	48	77	43	74
Financial management	57	92	45	78
School planning activity	57	92	44	76
Self-evaluations	46	74	36	62
Religious faith	18	86	11	92
Recommendations from previous evaluations	25	40	11	19
Overall organizational skills	61	98	41	71
Other	33	53	21	36

Notes:
1. Percentages for responses to "Religious faith" are based on a smaller sample of 21 superintendents representing Catholic jurisdictions. Similarly, 12 of the principals were from Catholic jurisdictions.
2. In addition to those aspects outlined above, superintendents listed 26 more items. Those aspects most frequently mentioned were (a) achievement of goals--three mentions, (b) leadership skills--three mentions, (c) professional development--two mentions, and (d) communication skills--two mentions.
3. Principals included 12 items in addition to those outlined above. Those aspects most frequently mentioned were (a) feedback from a "referent" group--three mentions, (b) evidence of instructional leadership--two mentions, and (c) perceptions of the superintendent--two mentions.
4. No response was received from one superintendent and four principals. Also, one principal was undecided.

and principals' responses regarding "student achievement" was only 3%, differences for the remaining five aspects ranged from 12% to 27%. More than 90% of superintendents noted that "financial management," "school planning activity," and "overall organizational skills were considered by their systems. In contrast, 78% of principals identified "financial management," 76% included "school planning activity," and 71% indicated that "overall organizational skills" were considered by their systems during a principal evaluation. For the four other aspects, the principal's percentages were slightly higher than the superintendents' percentages. Religious faith was considered by only Catholic separate school systems, therefore the sample for consideration of this aspect was considerably smaller.

In addition to those aspects outlined in Table 7.7 (including Notes), superintendents listed 22 items which were mentioned once: handling of critical incidents, dedication, anticipating potential problems, delegation of responsibilities, team work, work with school councils, recruitment of students, interactions with central office personnel, supervisory skills, human relations skills, curriculum, on-site observations, documents, attendance at school events, attendance at school council and staff meetings, portfolios, central office assessments, staff morale, teacher evaluation, classroom visits, involvement of staff in decision-making, and involvement of parents.

Principals who completed the questionnaire included 9 items in addition to those outlined in Table 7.7 (including Notes) which were mentioned only once: risk taking, vision, goals of the principal, the school environment, community service, professional development, perceptions of "advisors" to the superintendent, rapport with central office personnel, and curriculum knowledge. One principal stated

> *There is currently no formal policy to evaluate administrators. However, I was evaluated on those aspects checked (i.e., student/parent surveys, school planning activity, religious faith, and evidence of instructional leadership). The other principals have not undergone the same process.*

Means of data collection identified in the interviews (SI 8: PI 5). All of the superintendents and principals interviewed commented on these 11 sources of data mentioned in the interviews: interviews/discussions with principals, central office feedback, direct observation by the superintendent, general community feedback, parent feedback, staff feedback, student feedback, reports, portfolios, opinions of board members, and test scores. Only one interviewee, a superintendent, noted that all are used in the evaluation of principals, but added that some were definitely more important than others.

Three individuals from each group remarked that interviews and discussions with principals were an integral part of the evaluation process. One superintendent observed that this was an ongoing process used to communicate expectations and monitor progress in order to prevent "surprises" when the report was written.

While four superintendents and two principals included feedback from central office staff as a source of data used in evaluations, one superintendent noted that the amount of time for this contact was limited since the amalgamation of school systems in 1995.

Direct observation by the superintendent was considered important by two superintendents and one principal, however one superintendent noted that limited contact with school administrators restricted the usefulness of data from this source. The number of visits per year to each school in the system reported by superintendents varied from as few as 3 to more than 12.

Although two superintendents and two principals noted that feedback from the general community was used, one from each group remarked that this feedback was not a major source of data used in the evaluation of principals. Further, four respondents from each group indicated that parent feedback was considered in the evaluation process. Similarly, four superintendents and four principals pointed out that feedback from staff was used during principal evaluations. In addition, two principals and one superintendent remarked that student surveys were conducted, although one principal noted that this information was used more for an evaluation of the school program rather than for an evaluation of the principal.

Three respondents from each group indicated that data obtained from reports were used in the evaluation of principals. Those reports mentioned varied from routine annual reports to those addressing achievement of school and personal goals.

The use of portfolios was mentioned by two superintendents and one of these noted noted that portfolios are used for only a few principals in the system because development of portfolios is in an introductory stage.

While two superintendents and one principal indicated that board member opinions influence evaluation of principals, no one elaborated. In contrast, other superintendents and principals were definite that opinions of board members either were not or should not be considered.

With respect to test scores, three superintendents and one principal stated that these were considered during evaluations. However, two of these superintendents noted that use of these data was limited with one observing that

> *we would probably not use these data, but at the same time, if we find a school consistently low in a particular area with a reasonable explanation, you bet we zero in.*

Besides those means of collecting data identified in the interview question, one superintendent indicated that hard data in the form of financial information, complaints made to central office, reports, achievement scores on provincial and system tests, and the condition of school facilities are all considered when a principal is evaluated.

In addition to identifying which sources of data were used when principals were evaluated, superintendents and principals identified what they considered to the most and least reliable sources of information. Some respondents identified more than one source in each category.

Those sources considered most reliable by superintendents were (a) direct observation of superintendents--three mentions, (b) interviews/discussions with principals--two mentions, (c) central office feedback--two mentions, and one mention each for (d) staff feedback, and (e) hard data. Sources considered most reliable by principals were (a) staff feedback--three mentions, and one mention for each of (b) student feedback, and (c) central office feedback.

Sources considered least reliable by superintendents were (a) opinions of board members--two mentions, and one mention each for (b) general community feedback, and (c) "hearsay". Sources considered least reliable by principals were general community feedback and test scores with one mention each.

Two other sources received mixed response. Direct observation by superintendents was identified by one principal as one of the most reliable sources of data and one of the least reliable sources by another principal. The second principal commented on the minimal contact that the superintendent has with the school as the "limiting" factor. One superintendent and two principals identified parent feedback as one of the most reliable sources of data, but two superintendents and two principals noted that it was one of the least reliable sources. Limited responses on surveys and little contact with the school were cited as reasons to question the reliability of feedback from parents.

Responsibility for the Evaluation of Principals (SQ 18/PQ 17)

Few policy documents were clear about who conducted principal evaluations, although several noted that the superintendent was responsible for ensuring that evaluations were completed. In the questionnaires, both superintendents and principals identified the individual(s) in their system who evaluated principals. A summary of superintendent and principal responses is provided in Table 7.8.

Seventy-nine percent of superintendents and 62 % of principals noted that either the superintendent or a designate was responsible for completing the final formal evaluation report. The remaining principals and superintendents identified a variety of other members of central office staff who had this responsibility.

In the interviews, two principals and one superintendent indicated that the roles of individuals involved in evaluation were defined in policy.

Table 7.8

Frequency Distributions of Individuals Identified as Responsible for Preparing Formal Evaluation Reports on Principals. as Reported by Superintendents and Principals (SQ. 18; PQ. 17)

Title	Superintendents (N= 63)		Principals (N= 62)	
	f	%f	f	%f
Superintendent	37	61	29	48
Superintendent or designate	11	18	8	14
Other central office personnel	13	21	23	38

Notes: 1. Individuals with various titles were identified by superintendents as having responsibility for preparing evaluation reports: (a) associate superintendents--five mentions, (b) chief deputy or deputy superintendent--four mentions, (c) director--two mentions, and one mention for each of (d) area superintendent, and (e) "school operations services principal."

2. Principals also listed a variety of titles for other central office personnel involved in evaluating principals: (a) area superintendent--seven mentions, (b) director--seven mentions, (c) associate superintendent--five mentions, and (d) deputy superintendent--three mentions.

3. No response was received from two superintendents and two principals.

Two superintendents stated that policies were being reviewed and two noted that roles were not defined in policy. One principal remarked that she knew she was responsible to the superintendent but made no mention of policy. The other two principals could not recall whether roles were discussed in policy.

Frequency of Evaluations

Policies and practices for evaluation were analyzed to determine the frequency of principal evaluations intended in each school system. In addition, both superintendents and principals commented on the frequency of principal evaluation in their systems.

Documents. Information about the types of cycles (e.g., probationary, three-year) identified in the documents is provided in Table 7.9. Including the 7 types of cycles mentioned in "other," 16 different cycles of evaluations were mentioned a total of 87 times in the documents. Of the 41 documents provided by school systems, 8 did not comment on the frequency of evaluations for that system. Several of the remaining 33 systems listed more than one type of cycle used in that system: (a) one type--8 systems, (b) two types--10 systems, (c) three types--10 systems, (d) four types--3 systems, and (e) more than four types--2 systems. One of the systems which specified only one cycle noted that "systematic" evaluations were conducted.

Superintendents (SQ 21). In the questionnaire, 48 of the 63 superintendents noted that a regular cycle of evaluations is followed for evaluations of principals in their systems. Of the remaining 15 superintendents, 2 superintendents were undecided, 12 noted that they followed no regular cycle, and 1 superintendent did not provide any response. One of the "undecided" superintendents noted that in "theory" their system followed a defined cycle, however, in practice they did not. The other superintendent observed that

> *all principals are involved in formative evaluations each year, but summative evaluations occur only with first-year principals and as needed or requested thereafter.*

Another superintendent noted that a cycle had been followed until a

Table 7.9

Frequency Distributions of Types of Cycles of Evaluation Mentioned in the Policy Documents of 41 Systems

Type	f	%f
Probationary	15	17
Three years	12	14
As needed	12	14
Ongoing	11	13
On request	10	11
Annual	9	10
Five years	6	7
Four years	3	3
Two years	1	1
Other	8	9

Notes: 1. Some systems mentioned different types of cycles for principals with different amounts of experience (e.g., probationary for new principals and three year cycles for experienced principals).

2. "Probationary" evaluations included three mentions of evaluation for administrators in "acting" principalships.

3. "Ongoing" evaluations included three mentions of "self" evaluations.

4. "Other" included (a) first year in new position--2 mentions, and one mention for each of (b) once during the term, (c) for certification, (d) within two years, (e) final year of term, (f) "systematic," and (g) 1-5 years dependent on accreditation.

recent change to adopt the guidelines of the Alberta Education document (Alberta Education, 1995) on quality teaching. In this paper, the department advocates very stringent evaluation procedures during a qualifying period with follow up evaluations conducted on an "as needed" basis.

Of the 63 superintendents who completed the questionnaire, 51 identified the particular cycle followed in their school system. A summary of those responses appears in Table 7.10.

Superintendents of 33 systems noted that principals in their school systems were evaluated at least once every three years. However, this pattern appears to be changing. One superintendent in this group commented that *"we just can't keep up with new lower levels of central office staffing."* Two superintendents from systems which conduct annual evaluations of principals indicated that the cycle in use was being extended. Several systems have incorporated the use of self-evaluations as a mean of increasing professional effectiveness.

Principals (PQ 27). While superintendent responses were based on policy guidelines, principals who completed the questionnaire indicated how many times they had been evaluated in their current position. Of the 62 principals who completed the questionnaire, 41 indicated that they had been evaluated. Of these 41, 28 had been evaluated once, 10 twice, and 3 three times. Three principals did not respond to this question. The design of the question, however, did not allow for the possibility that principals who were in their second posting in the system within the accepted timeframe were evaluated during their first assignment.

Congruence of Practice to Policy

Both superintendents and principals commented on the degree to which policies and documented practices of evaluation were followed during evaluations in their systems.

Superintendents. Superintendents interviewed during Phase Three of the study offered a variety of responses regarding the congruence of practice to policy. In general, they expressed a belief that written

Table 7.10

Frequency Distributions of Cycles Used by School Systems When Evaluating Principals, as Reported by Superintendents (SQ. 21.b)

(N= 51)

Cycle	f	%f
Every year	9	18
Every two years	3	6
Every three years	15	29
Every three years (or as needed)	6	12
Every four or more years	14	27
Every four or more years (or as needed)	1	2
Other	3	6

Notes: 1. "Other" included one mention for each of (a) as needed, (b) in the year prior to the expiry of a five-year term, and (c) every one or two years.

2. The "no response" category included 11 of the 12 superintendents who indicated that their systems followed no regular cycle. The other superintendent did not respond to either part of the question.

3. One superintendent who indicated that no regular cycle was followed noted that evaluations are conducted every one to two years.

4. No response was received from 12 superintendents.

policy should be followed and to varying degrees all superintendents noted that policy or procedures were followed. However, three constraints upon compliance to written policy were mentioned.

First, some systems did not have written policy in place because the recent amalgamation of school systems had created an administrative overload. In addition to restructuring administrative and payroll procedures to accommodate larger numbers of staff, fewer central office administrators have had the responsibility to integrate policies of those systems which now are part of the regional system. Several of these policies were unique because they were created to resolve local issues. Therefore, many policy areas have not yet been addressed. In the absence of an integrated policy for the regional system, some were relying on procedures developed for one or more of the original systems.

A second constraint was the time required to adequately complete the evaluation process. Superintendents remarked that even before amalgamation, central office staff did not have enough time to meet policy expectations regarding the evaluation of staff. The 4% to 6% cap placed on administrative expenditures under the restructuring process initiated by the Alberta government has exacerbated this problem.

The match of policy statements to the purposes of evaluation also emerged as a possible constraint to adherence to policy. Policies primarily designed to promote professional development of school administrative staff may set expectations which could be problematic if the system finds that it has to initiate action for the termination of a principal's designation. If legal action is anticipated, policy guidelines would have to be followed strictly, as adherence to only some of the guidelines could jeopardize the desired outcome. For example, involvement of a vice-principal which would be valuable in formative evaluation procedures may not be desirable or warranted for more summative functions. One superintendent noted that this concern had caused policy to be rewritten to enable the system to more closely comply with policy and yet maintain the desired purpose for evaluations.

Principals (PQ 11). Table 7.11 summarizes principals' responses

Table 7.11

Frequency Distributions of the Degree to Which School System Policies Regarding the Evaluation of Principals Were Followed, as Reported by Principals (PQ. 11)
(N= 59)

Degree	f	%f
As described in policy	25	42
Approximately as described in policy	21	36
Not sure	10	17
Very different from what is described in policy	3	5

Note: No response was received from two principals. Also, one principal was undecided.

regarding the degree of congruency achieved in their systems. The majority of principals responding to the survey question indicated that their systems followed policy guidelines closely or fairly closely. Only 3 of the 59 principals stated that evaluation practices were very different from what was described in policy.

Remediation Programs (SQ 20)

Of the 63 superintendents who completed the questionnaire, 12 indicated that their systems had formal remediation programs to assist principals in difficulty and only 9 provided any description. In most cases, this description was very brief. For example, one superintendent noted that his system *"will develop a formal plan of assistance"* but provided no details regarding its format. The primary aspects of programs which were described included (a) identification of areas in need of attention, (b) development of goals, (c) mentoring by central office staff, (d) professional development workshops, and (e) regular monitoring of progress. While the remaining superintendents noted that they did not have formal programs, a few remarked that individual programs are developed as they are needed.

Only two principals who were interviewed indicated that their system had a program to assist principals having difficulties. The other three were not sure whether their system provided this assistance.

Specific Research Question 3.b

To what extent do contextual variables (e.g., size and location of school systems) influence policies and practices used in evaluation of principals?

Chapter 5 includes information about superintendents' and principals' identification of several contextual variables which influenced the selection of principals. Superintendents and principals similarly noted that contextual variables within the school and the community affect the evaluation of principals.

Superintendents (SQ 19)

Superintendents identified four major contextual factors which are considered when principals are evaluated: (a) the nature of the community, (b) the status of the principal, (c) school factors, and (d) school and system goals.

First, several superintendents stated that the demographics and historical background of a community frequently influence parental and community expectations regarding student achievement, school programs, and staff performance.

Second, experience in administration was also identified by superintendents as an important factor to consider during the evaluation. For example, expectations for a first-time principal would be different than those for someone who had been a principal for many years. Further, superintendents noted that contractual status affected the approach taken during an evaluation. Evaluation of principals in their first year of a three-year contract would differ in focus to an evaluation for a principal being considered for a renewal of designation.

Third, superintendents identified several important school characteristics which affect judgments during an evaluation of a principal's performance. For example, the type of school (e.g., elementary, French-language), numbers of students, and the nature of students attending the school all affect outcomes which may be considered in the evaluation. Also, superintendents noted that staff competencies, school climate, and school culture may have an influence on principal performance and should be considered in the principal's evaluation.

Fourth, several superintendents remarked that school goals and the degree to which these have been addressed affect the performance evaluation. For example one superintendent stated that

> *sometimes it is necessary to almost "forget" some areas as the issues of greatest need (goals) are addressed.*

One superintendent added that evidence of commitment to the system's mission and goals was important and would be considered when principals are evaluated.

Other factors which may influence performance evaluations include the purpose of the evaluation, concerns regarding principal performance, the number of principals to be evaluated in the year, possibilities for transfer, the health and general well being of the principal, and principal requests for an evaluation.

Principals (PQ 19)

Principals' responses were limited by the nature of the question in the questionnaire to influences relating to school and community characteristics. Of the 62 principals who completed the questionnaire, 32 indicated that the characteristics of the school affected how evaluations were conducted, 18 did not think that school characteristics had any impact, 6 principals were undecided, and 6 did not respond to the question. Similarly, of the 62 principals, 33 expressed an opinion that the characteristics of the community had an impact on principal evaluations, 18 did not believe there was any connection, 5 were undecided, 6 did not respond. One superintendent who stated that characteristics of the community affected evaluations remarked

> *no matter how well a principal might try to deliver the best possible educational practices in the school, sometimes if the practices don't fit the way the community thinks schools should be run (e.g., don't complain if students are grossly late most times) the principal could be removed because "he doesn't fit in the community."*

Comments provided by principals identified specific characteristics which they believed influenced evaluation of principals: the nature of the school, the size and type of school, the type of students, student attitudes, and the spiritual atmosphere in the school. Similarly, principals identified a number of specific community characteristics which they believed were considered when principals are evaluated: the size of the community, culture, language, philosophy of education, history, and the unique needs of the community. In addition to specific characteristics of the school and the community, principal performance in relation to school plans and goals was also cited as an outcome reviewed during evaluations.

Specific Research Question 3.c

What is the perceived connection between evaluation of principals and effectiveness of principals?

During interviews conducted in Phase Three of the study superintendents and principals commented on the connection between evaluations and the effectiveness of principals. Of 10 individuals interviewed, two principals stated firmly that there was a definite connection between the evaluation of principals and improvement in the performance of principals and the remaining three principals agreed that there may be or should be a connection. While one superintendent noted that there was a connection if evaluations were done properly, the other four superintendents remarked that there should be a connection between evaluation and improvement in performance,

Both groups identified a number of factors associated with performance evaluations which could contribute to improvement in individual performance: (a) personal reflection, (b) objective feedback from an observer, (c) discussion regarding performance and possible alternatives, (d) on-going coaching, (e) reducing the fear often associated with evaluations, and (f) increasing the base of information used in the evaluation process. However, they noted that none of these was considered to be sufficient by itself.

With respect to personal reflection, several systems have begun to incorporate self-evaluations which require principals to become critical self-evaluators. However, one principal remarked that a narrow focus on self-evaluation results in principals being evaluated on their ability as critical self-evaluators rather than on their overall performance. While the value of self-reflection was acknowledged, several respondents emphasized the value of objective observations of another party which serve to confirm the conclusions of the principal or to redirect attention to other areas of performance which need attention. Some noted that the presence of an observer also motivated the principal to continue with their own self-evaluation.

Similarly, both superintendents and principals emphasized the value of on-going discussions between the principal and a senior administrator or a peer mentor. They believed that relationships established over a period of time not only reduced the fear often associated with evaluation, but they provided an opportunity for principals to discuss current strategies and explore possible alternatives to planned administrative actions.

However, both groups also identified two primary factors which prevent principal evaluation from being an effective means of improving performance. First, some believed the increased emphasis on accountability has restricted the focus of evaluation. One principal noted that

> *a narrow emphasis on results as a foundation to principal evaluation is not a fair means of assessing principal performance.*

In addition, summative evaluations only confirm that principal performance is or is not meeting expectations but contribute little to professional growth. Both foci meet expectations of accountability. Initially, outcomes of a summative evaluation serve as an affirmation to both the public and the principal that results are being achieved. Further, if some dissatisfaction has been expressed, the evaluation demonstrates that the system is not ignoring the problem. However, conclusions regarding either focus do not necessarily lead to activities which would assist principals to improve their performance.

The second factor identified was a lack of time and personnel. While this has always been a problem in school systems, the recent amalgamation of school systems has exacerbated the situation. Fewer administrators in central office and increased workloads prevent supervisory staff from accepting the task of coaching the large numbers of principals for whom they are responsible. In addition, site-based management has increased the principal's workload to the point that little time remains to devout to professional development activities which would facilitate growth. The degree to which the lack of time is affecting the process may be summarized by the comments of one principal.

> *The role of principal is ever increasing in complexity. To genuinely*

> *engage in a thoughtful and authentic experience, the process must be 'dense.' This depends on establishing relationships of trust and mutual respect and it requires time. As system organizations are 'flattened,' who will do this work and where will the time come from? I also find myself torn. As more of the paperwork is relocated to schools due to system flattening, my role is being increasingly tagged to management essentials--at the expense sometimes of the very elements I most value and believe should be at the heart of my evaluative experience.*

In summary, those interviewed acknowledged that evaluations could and should contribute to improved effectiveness of principals, but it was generally recognized that a much better job could be done to reinforce the link between performance evaluations and the effectiveness of principals.

Specific Research Question 3.d (SQ 22: PQ 20)

To what extent are superintendents and principals satisfied with current evaluation policies and practices?

In the questionnaire, superintendents and principals expressed their level of satisfaction with the current practices used for the evaluation of principals in their school systems. In addition, several respondents identified changes which they believed would improve the process.

Superintendent and Principal Satisfaction

Superintendents' and principals' responses concerning levels of satisfaction with current practices are summarized in Table 7.12.

Of the 48 principals who provided a definite opinion regarding their satisfaction with evaluation practices, 33% stated that they were very satisfied and 43% that they were satisfied with practices used in their school systems. By comparison, of the 61 superintendents who expressed definite opinions, 18% maintained that they were very satisfied and 61% affirmed that they were satisfied with practices used to evaluate principals. However, 13 superintendents and 12 principals expressed a degree of dissatisfaction.

Table 7.12

Frequency Distributions of Levels of Satisfaction With the Current Process Used for Evaluating Principals, as Expressed by Superintendents and Principals (SQ. 22; PQ. 20)

Rating	Superintendents (N= 61)		Principals (N= 49)	
	f	%f	f	%f
Very satisfied	11	18	16	33
Satisfied	37	61	21	43
Dissatisfied	12	20	10	20
Very dissatisfied	1	2	2	4

Notes: 1. No response was received from one superintendent and 12 principals. Also, one superintendent and one principal were undecided.

2. Included in the "no response" group were two principals who remarked that they had not yet been evaluated, and one principal stated that no comment could be made at this time.

As mentioned earlier, principals in the study were from only 25 of the 66 school systems represented by superintendents. A closer examination of these 25 systems provides a different view of the results. While 13 superintendents noted a degree of dissatisfaction regarding practices used in their systems, only one of these superintendents was from the 25 school systems with principals in the study. Of the remaining 24 superintendents, 6 were "very satisfied" and 18 were "satisfied." The 16 who expressed high satisfaction with practices were from 6 of these 25 systems. However, the 12 principals that expressed dissatisfaction were from 11 of the 25 school systems. The opinions of 18 principals in five of these systems differed: 6 were satisfied, 5 were dissatisfied, and 7 provided no response. All five principals in four systems noted dissatisfaction while superintendents from the same systems reported satisfaction with evaluation practices. In the other two systems one of two principals in each system noted dissatisfaction while the other provided no response.

Of 18 principals who had not been evaluated during their current assignment, 6 expressed satisfaction with practices being used, 5 were dissatisfied, and 7 did not respond to the question.

Reasons for respondent dissatisfaction with evaluation practices were not articulated.

Desirable Changes to Evaluation Practices

While comments regarding evaluation practices currently used in school systems were made by 35 superintendents and 38 principals, not all respondents suggested changes in practices used in their systems. Seven superintendents noted that their systems were in the process of revising or developing policy in this area, and three superintendents mentioned that their system policies were in need of revision.

Similarly, 10 principals who made comments offered no suggestions for changes in practices. Of these 10 principals, five criticized aspects of the process, three noted that current practices were satisfactory without changes, one principal remarked that it was too early to make suggestions regarding changes since the process had only recently been revised, and one principal described practices used. Of the five principals who criticized practices in their systems, two expressed concerns with the use of surveys and "hearsay" perceptions, and noted that anonymous feedback from staff was considered to be unethical. Another principal remarked that principals are often held accountable for outcomes but rarely have the freedom to make changes which could enhance school performance. A final criticism focussed on perceptions was that, apart from evaluations for probationary principals, no principal evaluations were conducted.

However, superintendents and principals suggested several changes which could be made to the process. Superintendents provided a total of 44 suggestions and principals provided 41 suggestions. There were eight areas in which members of both groups provided suggestions. In addition, superintendents and principals identified areas not addressed by the other group. A frequency distribution of these responses is summarized in Table 7.13.

The frequency with which evaluations are conducted received the greatest attention from each group. Most principals noted that evaluations should be frequent and ongoing. For example, one principal suggested that a letter of evaluation should be provided on an annual basis. While superintendent opinions were mixed, the majority remarked that evaluations should be conducted on a regular, frequent, or ongoing basis. However, one superintendent stated that while

> *it is an extremely important function, it is time consuming. I wonder how much the principal gains from continuous annual evaluations. They are professional educators, surely every three years is sufficient!!*

In addition, two superintendents suggested that definite cycles for evaluation should be eliminated from policy statements.

Two comments regarding desired format changes in the evaluation process were mentioned by more than one superintendent: (a) the necessity of making practices more objective, and (b) the desirability of designing future evaluation practices more in line with the format

Table 7.13

Frequency Distribution of Suggested Changes to the Process of Principal Evaluation, as Reported by Superintendents and Principals (SQ 22.b/PQ 20.b)

Area	Suggestions			
	Superintendents		Principals	
	f	%f	f	%f
Frequency of evaluations	10	23	7	17
Format of evaluations	9	20	5	12
Focus of evaluations	6	14	6	15
Purpose of evaluations	6	14	4	10
Principal involvement in evaluations	4	9	4	10
Feedback from evaluations	2	5	1	2
Time lines for evaluations	2	5	0	0
Training for evaluators	2	5	0	0
Stakeholder involvement in evaluations	2	5	5	12
Formalizing policy	1	2	1	2
Central office involvement in evaluations	0	0	6	15
Other	0	0	2	5

Note: The "other" category included one mention for each of (a) "do the job," and (b) incorporate peer coaching or mentoring into the process.

outlined for teachers by Alberta Education (1995). Remarks made by principals also added support to these suggested changes. Further, superintendents suggested that principals should *"attend board meetings to tell the story of their schools."* They also noted that attempts should be made to change perceptions that principal evaluation is *"an event rather than a process."* A principal suggested that evaluations should be individualized because the number of principals prevented the superintendent from providing individual principals with direct feedback regarding their performance. The result, in his view, was a *"cookie cutter"* evaluation which was of little use to anyone.

With respect to the focus of evaluation, superintendents' comments in this area centred on the need to relate the evaluation of principal performance to the achievement of school goals and objectives. However, only two of six principals made similar suggestions. In contrast, other suggestions from principals focussed on *"growth"* in the principalship. In particular, one principal recommended a search for a balance between *"accountability"* and a focus on *"learning"* in the principalship. Another stated that clear expectations regarding performance should be established and communicated to principals well before the evaluation process is initiated regardless of the focus of the process.

The majority of superintendents' comments about purposes of evaluation focussed on the desirability to move toward formative evaluations. One superintendent's opinion summarized the sentiments of the others:

> *we want the evaluation to concentrate more on development rather than history.*

Another remarked that his system was working on policy that would ensure that principal evaluations would be separated more distinctly to reflect formative and summative functions. Similarly, principals indicated a desire to see evaluations become more formative. For example, one principal noted that evaluations and decisions to renew contracts should be separated and that more emphasis should be placed on changes in the process which would improve student achievement.

Principals' opinions regarding their involvement in the evaluation process may be summed by one principal's observation that evaluation was *"something to be done with, not done to."* All principals commenting on this facet of evaluation registered support for more principal involvement in planning the process. In contrast, superintendents' responses focussed more on the need to have principals engage in self-evaluation activities because they believed that principals should have more ownership of the process. Further, superintendents stated that evaluations should be more oriented to the development and use of portfolios rather than the use of checklists and popularity-based surveys.

Feedback from evaluations received limited response from both groups, but those who commented on this issue emphasized the need to provide adequate feedback to principals immediately after an evaluation is completed.

Both superintendents and principals remarked on the need to involve more stakeholders in the evaluation of principals. Also, one principal proposed that more weight should be given to the level of satisfaction with principal performance of various stakeholder groups. While principals suggested that staff, students, and parents should be involved in the process, one superintendent commented on the difficulty of obtaining constructive advice from staff because of the Alberta Teachers' Association Code of Ethics.

With respect to formalizing policy, one individual from each group stated that formalization of the process into policy would be a positive change from current practice.

In addition to the above eight areas identified by both superintendents and principals, four more were identified by only one group. Superintendents added "time lines for evaluations" and "training for evaluators," while principals commented on "involvement of central office staff" and "conducting evaluations."

Superintendents noted that time lines needed to be changed and clearly defined, however no suggestions were made whether time lines should be compressed or increased. In addition, superintendents suggested that evaluators should be better trained to conduct proper evaluations.

Involvement of central office staff received substantial attention from principals. Three specific reasons for additional superintendency involvement were given by principals. First, they believed that evaluators need to be more aware of the school culture and principal performance based on direct contact to effectively interact with a principal regarding performance. Second, a superintendent or designate who is in contact with principals is in a better position to model desired behavior or to mentor them. Finally, principals prefer direct, meaningful feedback from the superintendent or designate regarding their performance. Principals believe that ongoing contact between central office staff and the principal is beneficial for both the evaluation process and the performance of the principal.

Finally, one principal observed that evaluation

> *must be done. It should be made obvious so that teachers, support staff and students all feel that 'everyone' gets evaluated!*

He concluded that administration should *"lead by example, this is very important for professional growth."* This principal also noted that he had not been evaluated in the three years in his current position.

Other Comments (SQ 23: PQ 21)

In addition to comments made regarding other issues raised in the questionnaire, both superintendents and principals commented further on the evaluation of principals. Several of these comments were similar to those made regarding other facets of the study and have been included in the appropriate sections earlier in the chapter. However, both superintendents and principals made additional comments about eight different issues related to the evaluation of principals: (a) the importance of evaluations, (b) problems with current practice, (c) purposes for evaluation, (d) types of evaluation, (e) the process of evaluation, (f) criteria used in evaluations, (g) frequency of evaluations, and (h) policy development. While both principals and superintendents addressed only five of the eight issues, the topics are discussed below in the order identified to preserve the natural development of the topic.

With respect to the importance of the evaluation of principals, superintendents generally remarked that this was important and more attention was required in this areas. One superintendent stated that principal evaluation is a *"tough but rewarding"* enterprise. Another said that evaluation is

> *an extremely important area but one that tends to receive minimal attention.*

Superintendents' concerns regarding current practices were limited to time constraints, and the challenge of involving school councils in the process. One superintendent noted that a primary difficulty encountered in staff evaluation is the

> *challenge for the supervisor to make sufficient time available to accomplish the intent of the policy.*

Further, superintendents noted that restructuring of education and the legislated role of school councils has changed the process of evaluations. Schools systems which previously had no formal process to accommodate school council involvement are now modifying evaluation procedures to provide their input. In contrast, principals identified four factors which could cause problems with the current process being used: (a) the uniqueness of individual schools, (b) limited administrative resources at the central office level, (c) failure of central office staff to respect the principle of site-based management, and (d) local politics. Because each school is different, following a single prescribed set of expectations would not give a fair evaluation of principal performance. Besides concerns regarding unfair expectation, principals commented on the negative effects of smaller central office staffs on principal evaluations. For example, fewer central office personnel results in less opportunity for one-on-one contact with superordinates which some value as part of the feedback integral to the evaluation process. In addition, a few principals expressed concerns with the attitudes of central office personnel toward school administrators. One principal stated

> *Our evaluation process is not designed to provide opportunities for educators to grow. Risk-taking should be supported to provide educational opportunities for staff and kids, however, it is not supported in our district. I am confused that theory and practice in collaborative decision-making is criticized while we call ourselves a site-based management district. While I understand the need for an umbrella focus in education, we should be allowed to grow as individuals within the organization.*

While restructuring of education in Alberta included a mandated move toward site-based management, it is evident that some systems have not progressed as far as others. Therefore, principals have a concern that beliefs held by superintendents about the role of the principal which are inconsistent with those inferred by site-based management negatively influence the evaluation of the principal. Finally, principals noted a concern that local politics often play a significant role in the evaluation of principals. Opinions of important stakeholders in the school community too often have an inordinate affect on the outcome of administrator evaluations.

While both superintendents and principals remarked that the primary purpose of evaluation should be to help principals grow professionally, they also noted that evaluation serves other purposes (e.g., decisions regarding transfers, renewal of contracts, or removal of designation). They further noted that these purposes should be made clear to the evaluatee.

Principals identified three different types of evaluation: self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and 360 degree evaluation. One principal believed that self-directed assessments provided

> *an opportunity for professionals to evaluate their own need to change. This type of evaluation creates opportunities for long-term directed growth.*

Peer and 360 degree evaluations offered additional feedback for the principal to assess the need for growth or redirection of activities.

Superintendents and principals also addressed four specific issues related to practices used in evaluation. First, the evaluator and the principal should discuss the professional and personal goals the principal is working toward early in the process. Second, principals should be involved in designing practices. A superintendent noted that

> *principals have to feel the evaluation is done "with them" rather than "to them."*

One principal remarked that

> *an understanding of the nature of the students and current staff are important considerations in the design and implementation of the plan.*

During this aspect of the process, the purpose of the evaluation must be clearly defined and communicated. Third, respondents commented on guidelines for time lines for the evaluation. One principal noted that the process should be short enough to be effective yet take the necessary amount of time to ensure that accurate and sufficient information was gathered to complete a report which would be useful for professional growth.

Finally, principals and superintendents offered suggestions regarding means which are used to collect information. While one superintendent reported a desire to move toward the use of portfolios for evaluation, another observed that portfolios are not sufficient in themselves and added that evaluators must *"gather data from a variety of sources and be thorough."* One principal also emphasized the need for to collect data from a variety of sources but noted that these data should relate to criteria established for the evaluation. He also concluded that

> *working closely with an observer would help one assess and evaluate how you are doing and assist in reflecting and planning for growth and development.*

Another principal stated that stakeholder feedback from satisfaction surveys should be used to develop growth plans for the school and not just for the evaluation of the principal. If surveys are used in conjunction with other data they are useful, however, surveys alone were not considered valid. In addition, one principal remarked that varying perspectives on principal performance would be beneficial. For example, input from other sources (e.g., trustee, parent, teachers) would enhance the observations and conclusions of the superintendent.

With respect to criteria which should be used in the evaluation of principals, opinions varied markedly. The single superintendent who mentioned criteria noted that future evaluations would be more closely tied to results, but no specific results were identified. In contrast, a principal affirmed that *"the principal must be an educational leader, not a manager"* and that principals should be judged on their ability to inspire others and implement school plans. Other principals stated that the support that principals receive from parents, students, staff, and central office staff should be considered in an evaluation. Further, principals noted that a principal's effectiveness often depends on the ability of school staff to cope with change. This observation made by a principal summarizes the current situation:

> *The changes that have occurred in the role of principal require the development of new exemplars of successful principals. I personally feel I am inventing my role as I go and that its invention is a result of constant negotiation between the roles of instructional leadership, classroom teacher (I teach 1/2 time), staff development trainer, financial manager, publisher and writer, meeting facilitator, and community worker among others. Exemplars of successful principals doing a comparable job would serve as a reference point for personal evaluation.*

Limited references were made regarding the frequency of evaluations. A superintendent stated that formal evaluations should be conducted on a "needs only" basis, but supervision of principals should be an ongoing process. One principal reported that principals in her system had recently been advised that *"unless there were problems, there would be no evaluation of principals in our district!"*

As mentioned earlier, only 41 of 66 systems provided policy documents relating to the evaluation of principals. While respondents from both groups indicated that policies should be developed, one superintendent concluded that, because the role of the principal is changing significantly,

> *development of new practice expectations and evaluation policies are potentially premature and a waste of time. Conversely waiting until the job quits evolving may be a bigger waste of time.*

Specific Research Question 3.e

To what extent are recommendations in the literature regarding the evaluation of principals reflected in practices used by school systems in the evaluation of principals?

The study identified several practices currently used by school systems in Alberta. These practices are now compared with those recommended in the literature. Nine practices identified and discussed in Chapter 2 are outlined below with comments regarding the degree of compliance achieved by school systems.

Identify the Purposes for Evaluation

As mentioned earlier, 41 school systems provided written policies and practices regarding the evaluation of principals. Of these 41 documents, 31 contained statements regarding the purposes for evaluation. Policy documents contained two to seven purposes for evaluation.

Two important purposes for evaluation are discussed in Chapter 2. Anderson (1991) stated that school systems should focus on encouraging professional growth and ensuring that system staff are competent. The primary purpose for evaluations identified in the documents and by superintendents in the questionnaire was to encourage professional development. The principals' mean for this purpose ranked fourth. Superintendents' and principal's ratings for "assessing the extent to which expectations are met" resulted in the second highest mean for superintendents and the highest mean for principals who completed the questionnaire. It was fourth highest in the number of mentions in the documents.

Anderson (1991) also recommended that everyone in the process must understand and agree to the purposes identified. While the majority of both superintendents and principals reported that policies were communicated either extensively or selectively, differences in opinion regarding the importance of purposes identified suggests that communication may not have been sufficiently clear.

Develop Clear Performance Expectations

Although many of the documents provided lists of criteria to be used in the evaluation of principals, few included a clear articulation of standards of performance. Similarly, principals identified criteria which they believe were used in their systems and criteria which they believed should be used to evaluate principals, however, standards of performance for these criteria were not mentioned. During the interviews, both superintendents and principals mentioned standards but perceptions about the degree to which they have been or should be articulated in their schools systems varied markedly. One principal reported that *"my number one source of learning regarding my role has been the university."* A superintendent stated

> *I don't think I would ever want a job description which would articulate the minute details for which the principal is responsible. For example, you don't want to stipulate that they must evaluate five teachers every year, but yes, staff evaluation is an important function of the principal.*

Two other superintendents mentioned that these had been discussed in their system but no clear set of standards existed. In contrast, two superintendents and one principal remarked that clear expectations had been established and communicated in their systems.

Involve Principals in Planning

Anderson (1991) observed that research seems to indicate that principal involvement in planning enhances the degree of understanding and acceptance of the process. Responses to the questionnaire indicated that principals were involved in five planning activities related to evaluations: (a) input in development of policy about evaluation of principals, (b) establishing criteria for their own evaluation, (c) deciding on who provides information for their own evaluation, (d) deciding on time lines for their own evaluation, and (e) selecting their own evaluator. The majority of respondents from both groups noted that principals were most involved in development of policy and least involved in choosing their own evaluator. Superintendents consistently reported a higher level of involvement than was reported by principals. Further, Anderson cautioned that development or revision of evaluation practices should "be done carefully, slowly, and systematically" (p. 109). There is no evidence in the data which suggests how the process had been approached by school systems.

Encourage Goal Setting and Self-reflection

Evidence collected from the documents, questionnaires, and interviews indicates that an increasing number of systems have incorporated self-evaluations as part of the evaluation process. Principals are required to establish school and personal goals, identify how progress will be assessed, and report on outcomes.

Frequently Observe Principals in Action

In a study of "effective" school systems in California, Hallinger and Murphy (1985) noted that the major contributing factor to the success of the system was the amount of time central office personnel dedicated to direct contact with the school and the school administration. Further, Anderson (1991) maintained that research demonstrated "that evaluation and supervision of principals are improved when superintendents or central office supervisors devote ample time to working with and observing principals" (p. 110). While respondents from both groups commented on the importance of direct supervision, reduced complements of superintendency staff and increased workloads have reduced the amount of direct contact with principals. Several superintendents noted that regular evaluation cycles were either being eliminated or the time between evaluations was being increased.

Involve Peers and Teachers in Providing Feedback

The majority of superintendents and principals in the interviews observed that feedback from staff was used in evaluations. Some of these individuals noted that staff feedback was one of the most reliable sources of information which could be considered in the process. No respondent mentioned peer assessments as part of the formal process. One principal remarked in the interview that feedback from vice-principals was useful to provide perspective for conclusions obtained through self-reflection. Two other principals stated that peer mentors would facilitate "orientation to" and "growth in" the principalship.

Collect Artifacts

In addition to evidence collected by direct observation, evaluators in the province collect other information that provides feedback on principal performance. Documents from 10 systems identified annual reports, student results, and financial data as valid sources of information for consideration in evaluations. Other sources of data identified in the study included (a) parent feedback, (b) staff feedback, (c) student feedback, (d) portfolios, and (e) school planning documents. Anderson (1991) noted that the effectiveness of this information depended on early identification of what data would be collected and how it would be used. Although several of the policies identified data which would be used, no other information collected in the study provided evidence about what information was communicated to principals and when it was communicated.

Adopt a Cyclical Approach to Evaluation

Of 41 policy documents, 33 included statements about particular cycles which were used in those systems. In addition, 51 of 63 superintendents identified a specific cycle for evaluations in their systems. In addition to evaluations conducted during a principal's probationary year, three-year cycles were most frequently mentioned in the documents. Three-year cycles were also the most prevalent cycle identified by superintendents Although the majority of systems appeared to follow specific cycles for evaluations, 18 of 62 principals noted that they had not been evaluated in their current position. Moreover, several superintendents suggested that definite cycles be eliminated because there was insufficient time and too few evaluators to maintain existing cycles.

Reward Outstanding Performance

Anderson (1991) remarked that exemplary performance in positions of leadership should be rewarded, but because merit programs are difficult to design and administer, school systems may explore other means of recognizing excellence. For example, recognition in public forums, letters of appreciation, or incentives in the form of more extensive professional development opportunities such as out-of-territory conferences could be implemented. While this issue was not addressed in the study, no evidence was disclosed which would support a conclusion that outstanding performance is recognized in school systems in the province.

Summary

This section presents a summary of the major findings regarding evaluation policies and practices under the same organization as was used throughout the chapter.

Dissemination of Information About Policies

Only 41 of the 66 school systems participating in the study provided copies of policies or written practices for analysis. While some systems had highly developed procedures, many lacked detail regarding the criteria and processes which would be used in the evaluation of principals. In the questionnaire, all superintendents and the majority of principals reported that policies and practices were communicated either extensively or selectively throughout their school systems, but differences in opinions regarding aspects of these policies (e.g., purposes for evaluation) raises a question regarding the congruency of understanding of policies between superintendents and principals.

Purposes for Evaluation

Of the 41 systems which provided documents, 31 identified 13 purposes for evaluation. Promotion of professional growth and the provision of information for administrative decisions were mentioned in more than 75% of these documents. The two purposes rated highest in importance by superintendents who completed the questionnaire were the promotion of professional development and assessment of the extent to which principals meet established expectations. Principals rated assessment of the extent to which principals meet expectations and the improvement of student performance as the two most important purposes for principal evaluations in their systems. Superintendents and principals did not agree on the relative importance of any of the 10 purposes rated.

Principal Involvement in Planning Evaluations

Respondents from both groups noted principal involvement in each of the five activities listed in the questionnaire. In each case, a higher proportion of superintendents than principals reported principal involvement. Principals were most frequently identified as being involved in policy development and least involved in choosing their evaluator.

Approaches to Evaluation

Three approaches to evaluation are used by school systems in Alberta: results-based, role description-based, and "best practice"-based. Most of the superintendents and principals who were interviewed noted that their systems used a combination of two or more of these approaches. Although, consideration of results was important, the approach most frequently mentioned was "best practice."

Role of Self-evaluations in the Evaluation Process

Several superintendents and principals remarked that self-evaluations are used as part of principal evaluations. The majority of superintendents and principals noted that the primary function of self-evaluations was to promote professional development/improvement. The extent to which information collected through self-evaluations influenced the formal evaluation of the principal varied remarkedly.

Components Used in Evaluations of Principals

Components identified in the documents by order of mentions included (a) establishing appeal procedures, (b) communicating criteria and processes to be used, (c) data-collecting, (d) setting conference schedules, (e) writing reports, and (f) developing an atmosphere of trust. Of the 10 aspects listed in the questionnaire, the four most frequently mentioned by superintendents were organizational skills, financial management, school planning activities, and student achievement. The four most frequently mentioned by principals were financial management, school planning activities, parent surveys, and student achievement. While the relative importance noted by respondents from both groups for many of these aspects was similar, some differed markedly.

Responsibility for Evaluating Principals

The majority of respondents to the questionnaire reported that the superintendent or a designate was responsible for evaluating principals. In these cases, the designate was not identified by position. Other personnel identified included directors, area superintendents, associate/deputy superintendents, and "school operations services principal."

Frequency of Evaluations

Five definite cycles ranging from one to five years were identified in the documents and by superintendents in the questionnaire. The three-year cycle was most frequently mentioned. In addition to these cycles, superintendents noted that evaluations are often conducted on an "as needed" basis.

Congruence of Practice to Policy

While the superintendents who were interviewed and the majority of principals who completed the questionnaire concluded that practice followed closely to policy, superintendents identified three constraints to adherence to policy which included the absence of current policy because of administrative workloads, insufficient time, and a poor match of policy statements to the purpose of evaluation.

Remediation Programs

Few respondents acknowledged the existence of remediation programs in their school system. Those who did noted that their systems provided information about these programs.

Circumstances Which May Influence Evaluations

Both superintendents and principals identified several school and community characteristics which influence the evaluation of principals.

In addition, respondents from both groups observed that the extent to which the principal achieved school and system goals was considered in the evaluation. Superintendents also noted that the amount of administrative experience accumulated by the principal could influence the process.

Connection Between Principal Evaluations and Effectiveness of Principals

While superintendents and principals who were interviewed believed there should be a connection, only two principals firmly stated that a connection existed between principal evaluations and effectiveness of principals.

Levels of Satisfaction with Current Policy and Practices

Of those completing the questionnaire, 89% of superintendents and 76% of principals were either satisfied or very satisfied with practices used to evaluate principals with a higher percentage of principals than superintendents indicating that they were "very satisfied" with current policies and practices.

Superintendents and principals suggested changes in the following areas: (a) frequency of evaluations, (b) format of evaluations, (c) focus of evaluations, (d) purpose of evaluations, (e) principal involvement in evaluations, (f) feedback from evaluations, (g) involvement of stakeholders, and (h) formalizing policy. In addition, superintendents suggested changes in time lines for evaluations and training for evaluators, while principals commented on involvement of central office staff and conducting evaluations. Suggestions made in several of these areas varies markedly.

Comparison of Current With Recommended Practices

In this researcher's opinion, school systems in Alberta rated moderately well on the nine recommended practices identified in Chapter 2. Systems rated highly on stating purposes for evaluations, involving teachers in evaluations, collecting artifacts, and encouraging goal setting and self-reflection, although some differences in opinions existed between superintendents and principals about the purposes for evaluations in their systems. Involving principals in planning received a moderate rating. More opportunities for principals to be involved in planning could reduce some of the differences of opinion which exist between principals and superintendents. Similarly, develop clear performance expectations was give a moderate rating. The majority of systems have established criteria, but common understandings between evaluators and evaluatees regarding "acceptable" performance for particular criterion is lacking. Adopt a cyclical approach to evaluations would be rated moderate to low because several systems have eliminated or are considering elimination of regular cycles for evaluation. Frequently observe principals in action and rewarding outstanding performance received a low rating.

Chapter 8

Criteria Used in the Evaluation of Principals

While Chapter 7 concentrated on policies and practices used by school systems for the evaluation of school principals, Chapter 8 centres on criteria used in the evaluation of principals and the extent to which recommendations in the literature about effectiveness of principals are reflected in criteria used by school systems in the evaluation of principals.

Specific Research Question 4.a

What criteria are currently used by school systems in the evaluation of principals in Alberta?

Copies of school system policy documents received in Phase One described criteria used by school systems. In addition, principals identified (a) the three main criteria which they believed were used in their systems during the evaluation of principals, and (b) the three main criteria which they believed should be used in evaluations in their systems. Those superintendents who were interviewed commented on a list of criteria which were identified in the interview and highlighted those criteria which they considered to be most important.

Criteria Used in the Evaluation of Principals

This section of the chapter discusses (a) criteria identified in the policy documents, (b) criteria identified in the questionnaire, (c) comparison of policies and practices with principals' perceptions, and (d) criteria identified in the interviews.

Systems with written criteria. Both superintendents and principals commented on whether their school systems had written criteria for the evaluation of principals.

While all five superintendents who were interviewed (SI 9) noted that their systems did have written criteria, their comments suggested quite a range in the specificity of these criteria and their satisfaction with them. Three were very definite about the existence of written criteria but only one offered further details about these criteria:

Yes we have and they come from a variety of areas: curriculum

> *knowledge, implementation, evaluation of curriculum and evaluation skills with staff are areas that we look at. To be quite honest, while we do not want chaos on the business side, the education of kids is paramount.*

One superintendent noted that the system had written criteria but that these were not *"in as great a form as we'd like."* In addition, the system had written guidelines which outlined the practices which would be used and questions which would be asked but these were not part of the formal policy. The fifth superintendent noted that *"it is in the unofficial written stage at this time."* This regional system was attempting to synthesize details from the four former systems to form a set of criteria which would meet the needs of the new system. Further, the superintendent commented that

> *during this time of regionalization we have found it has been tough to follow the criteria.*

Of the 62 principals who completed the questionnaire (PQ 14), 47 indicated that their systems had written criteria, 13 stated that their systems did not, one was undecided, and one principal did not respond to the question.

Criteria mentioned in policy documents. As stated earlier, 41 of the 66 superintendents provided documentation describing practices and criteria used in the evaluation of principals. Criteria were articulated in 33 of the 41. The eight policy documents which did not include written criteria noted that criteria used in the system were based on current research applicable to local needs, conditions, and priorities of the system. Policy documents from 14 school systems declared that criteria used in those systems were those outlined in job descriptions developed for system administrators. Another four policy packages included review documents used during the evaluation process which included statements about criteria considered in evaluations. In addition, statements in one policy document noted that criteria used in that system were those identified in the Alberta School Act (1994).

In the 33 policy documents analyzed, 130 specific criteria were mentioned a total of 725 times. The majority of criteria articulated were related to performance associated with job-related skills, knowledge, and activities or individual characteristics. For the purpose of this study, these criteria were grouped into the same general categories identified in Chapter 6 regarding the selection of principals. However, specific criteria included in policies on evaluation related to only a few of the general criteria discussed in Chapter 6: (a) job-related skills and knowledge, (b) leadership, (c) performance, and (d) personal characteristics. A summary of criteria articulated in policy documents appears in Table 8.1.

Specific criteria related to job-related skills and knowledge were described in 32 of the 41 policy documents. As mentioned earlier, job-related skills were further divided into management and human relations skills. Criteria related to 22 different management skills appeared in 32 policies. A summary of these skills is provided in Table 8.2. Skills which related to management of human, physical, and fiscal resources were most frequently mentioned. Also receiving a high level of attention were the ability of the principal to maintain discipline in the school as well as development of school goals and objectives. Each of these were identified in at least 78% of policy documents analyzed.

Criteria associated with 11 human relations skills were mentioned in 30 policy documents. These criteria are summarized in Table 8.3. The importance of effective communication was noted in 93% of policy documents making reference to various human relations skills. Communication with central office and informing staff of the availability of resources were listed separately because it was apparent that the focus of these types of communication served a different purpose than communication with other stakeholder groups. The principal's ability to create a collaborative environment in the school was the second most frequently mentioned criterion.

Criteria related to leadership skills were mentioned in 32 of the 41 policy documents. Two types of leadership were included: instructional leadership and spiritual leadership. References to instructional leadership were common to both separate and public school systems, but

Table 8.1

Frequency Distributions of Criteria for Principal Evaluation Mentioned in the Policy Documents from 33 Systems

Criteria	f	%f
Job-related skills and knowledge	32	97
Leadership ability	32	97
Performance	30	91
Personal qualities	24	73
Results	14	34
Other	7	21

Notes: 1. Criteria related to stakeholder satisfaction were not mentioned in policy documents.

2. "Other" included (a) involved in system activities--three mentions, and one mention for each of (b) recognize student achievement, (c) encourage staff to use positive reinforcement with students, (d) handle emergencies, and (e) provide successful distance-learning programs.

3. Eight systems of the 41 which supplied policy documents did not include criteria in these documents.

4. Job-related skills and knowledge was sub-divided into "management" (Table 8.2) and "human relations skills" (Table 8.3).

5. Mentions of "results" in policy documents were restricted to maximizing student achievement.

Table 8.2

Frequency Distributions of Specific Criteria Relating to Management Used in Evaluation of School Principals, as Identified in Policy Documents of 32 Systems

Specific criteria	f	%f
Manage human resources	30	94
Manage physical resources	28	88
Manage of fiscal resources	28	88
Maintain student discipline	27	84
Develop goals and objectives	25	78
Develop a school vision, philosophy, and mission statement	17	53
Work with community agencies	13	41
Make sound decisions	13	41
Implement the school vision, goals, and objectives	12	38
Maintain student records	10	31
Anticipate and plan for problems	4	13
Delegate responsibilities	3	9
Manage collaboratively	2	6
Be an advocate	2	6
Other	6	19

Notes: 1. "Other" includes one mention for each of (a) assess student and community needs, (b) analyze problems, (c) effect change, (d) conduct high-quality behaviorally descriptive interviews, (e) act as a spokesperson for the school, and (f) organize efficiently.

2, "Be an advocate" included interventions on behalf of students, staff, and the community.

3. Only 32 of the 33 systems which included criteria in the documents mentioned management criteria.

Table 8.3

Frequency Distributions of Specific Criteria Relating to Human Relations Skills Used in the Evaluation of Principals, as Identified in Policy Documents of 30 Systems

Specific criteria	f	%f
Communicate with stakeholders	28	93
Create a collaborative environment	23	77
Develop staff morale	11	37
Mediate and resolve conflicts	6	20
Communicate with central office	6	20
Promote corporate unity	3	10
Develop and work with a school council	2	7
Recognize staff accomplishments	2	7
Keep staff informed of available resources	2	7
Empower staff	1	3

Notes: 1. "Promote corporate unity" included one mention for each of "effect good cooperation between teachers," and "promote a sense of community."

2. Only 30 of 33 systems which included criteria in the documents mentioned human relations criteria.

the six references to spiritual leadership were restricted to policies from separate school systems.

Of 41 policy documents, 32 contained criteria relating to 27 specific facets of instructional leadership. (See Table 8.4.) Those specific criteria which were mentioned most frequently included "keep current in learning theory," "provide leadership in curriculum development," "initiate and support professional development," "create a good learning environment," and "support staff."

Criteria relating to performance in a variety of activities appeared in 30 of 41 policy documents. Table 8.5 provides an outline of 27 specific performance criteria which were mentioned. Evaluation of staff, students and programs were mentioned most frequently as criteria used in the evaluation of principals. All 30 policy documents which included performance criteria noted that the principal's involvement in staff evaluations was considered during their evaluation. In addition, 80% of documents included mentions of the evaluation of student achievement, and 57 % mentioned program evaluations.

Criteria related to 43 personal characteristics were cited in 24 of 41 policies. (See Table 8.6.) While 43 personal characteristics were identified, only "is a continuous learner" was mentioned in more than 50 % of the policies. "Shows integrity" and "demonstrates professional commitment" received the next highest number of mentions. The remaining 40 personal characteristics received either one, two, or three mentions in all of the policies. Of the 41 policy documents, 14 mentioned the criterion of maximizing student achievement.

Criteria identified in the questionnaire (PQ 15). Because policy documents included a broad range of criteria, no questions were included in the questionnaire for superintendents about criteria for evaluation. However, during Phase Three, superintendents who were interviewed commented on criteria used in their systems. These results are discussed later in the chapter.

In the questionnaire. principals identified three criteria which they believed were currently used in their school systems and three criteria

Table 8.4

Frequency Distributions of Specific Criteria Relating to Instructional Leadership Skills and Activities Used in the Evaluation of Principals, as Identified in Policy Documents of 32 Systems

Specific criteria	f	%f
Keep current in learning theory	31	97
Provide leadership in curriculum development	28	88
Initiate and support professional development	21	66
Create a good learning environment	20	63
Support staff	19	59
Ensure that instruction is consistent with the curriculum	15	47
Maximize student achievement	14	44
Possess sound beliefs about learning and teaching	7	22
Maintain high expectations	4	13
Promote student welfare	4	13
Demonstrate reflective practice	3	9
Provide guidance to students	3	9
Monitor use of instructional time	2	6
Forecast the needs of students	2	6
Demonstrate a commitment to the improvement of instruction	2	6
Develop a positive school climate	2	6
Other	12	38

Notes: 1. "Other" included one mention for each of (a) maintain direct contact with teaching, (b) visit classrooms, (c) demonstrate instructional leadership, (d) inspire teachers to believe that all students are capable of learning, (e) organize the school to provide learning, (f) consult with and advise teachers on issues of mutual concern, (g) facilitate the best opportunity for students, (h) demonstrate interest in the growth of staff, (i) ensure that staff demonstrate care for other staff, students, and parents, (j) facilitate a community of learners, (k) clearly outline roles and expectations of staff, and (l) ensure that adequate teaching time is available.

2. Only 32 of 33 systems which included criteria in the documents mentioned instructional leadership criteria.

Table 8.5

Frequency Distributions of Specific Criteria Relating to Principal Performance Used in the Evaluation of Principals, as Identified in Policy Documents of 30 Systems

Specific criteria	f	%f
Evaluate staff	30	100
Evaluate student performance	24	80
Evaluate programs	17	57
Operate with system perspective	16	53
Report results	12	40
Submit reports	9	30
Schedule extra-curricular events	8	27
Perform other duties assigned by the board or the superintendent	7	23
Conduct staff meetings	5	17
Interpret the board philosophy, policy, and program objectives to staff	5	17
Set the school timetable	3	10
Be visible around the school	3	10
Attend monthly administrator meetings	3	10
Be involved in system committees and activities	3	10
Conduct fire drills	2	7
Monitor transportation	2	7
Other	11	36

Notes: 1. "Other" included one mention for each of (a) ensure that the flag is flown, (b) report vandalism to the RCMP, (c) conduct an annual inventory, (d) produce a handbook for students, staff, and parents, (e) provide adequate library services, (f) maintain files, (g) maintain acceptable policies and practices, (h) recognize student achievement, (i) encourage staff to provide positive reinforcement to students, (k) provide a successful distance learning program, and (l) handle emergencies.

2. Only 30 of the 33 systems which included criteria in the documents mentioned performance criteria.

Table 8.6

Frequency Distributions of Specific Criteria Relating to Personal Characteristics Used in the Evaluation of Principals, as Identified in 24 Policy Documents

Specific criteria	f	%f
Is a continuous learner	14	58
Shows integrity	7	29
Demonstrates professional commitment	5	21
Is respected	3	13
Is a motivator	3	13
Is an initiator	2	8
Has a sense of humor	2	8
Is respectful	2	8
Is responsible	2	8
Other	18	75

Notes: 1. "Other" included one mention for each of (a) cares for personal health, (b) shows initiative, (c) is flexible, (d) is independent, (e) is patient, (f) demonstrates good judgment, (g) is enthusiastic, (h) is resolute, (i) is reliable, (j) demonstrates strength (of leadership), (k) is loyal, (l) is thorough, (m) is well groomed, (n) is punctual, (o) exhibits trust, (p) thinks quickly (q) is open to new ideas, (r) is authoritative when necessary, (s) shows concern for all, (t) listens effectively, (u) demonstrates honesty, (v) is trustworthy, (w) is visionary, (x) manages anger, (y) shows confidence, (z) acts fairly, (aa) is consistent, (bb) is easy to talk to, (cc) demonstrates exemplary practice, (dd) is conscientious, (ee) is self-motivated, (ff) is self-directed, (gg) respects confidentiality, and (hh) is dependable.

2. Only 24 of 33 systems which included criteria in the documents had criteria relating to personal characteristics.

which they considered should be used when principals are evaluated.

Criteria which principals believed were currently used in their school systems are summarized in Table 8.7. Only 24 of the 62 principals who completed questionnaires provided three responses, 10 more than three, 11 two, and 6 one, while 7 principals did not respond. Of the seven principals who did not respond, four expressed uncertainty regarding either existing criteria or the status of policy in their system. In some cases, principals listed two or more aspects of the same criteria which were not considered to be separate criteria for the purpose of this analysis. However, these were included with additional criteria mentioned in the notes accompanying the table.

Various aspects associated with job-related skills and knowledge were mentioned most frequently by principals. Of 29 mentions of job-related skills and knowledge, 19 referred to management, 9 to human relations skills, and one was a general reference to job-related skills and knowledge.

Principals identified seven specific skills associated with management of the school which they believed are considered by their school systems during an evaluation of principal performance. While 6 of 19 mentions were general references to management skills, 13 mentions were divided as follows: (a) establishing clear goals--six mentions, (b) solving problems--two mentions, and one mention for each of (c) implementing change, (d) implementing and monitoring plans, (e) financial planning, (f) plant management, and (g) improving administrative practice.

Human relations skills were identified by nine principals as aspects of job-related skills and knowledge which are considered in the evaluation process. Of the nine mentions, five were general reference to to human relations skills, two involved communications skills, and one mention each for (a) the ability to be accepted and respected by the parent community, (b) being a team player, and (c) preserving the dignity of individuals.

Of 62 principals, 26 indicated that "results" were considered by

Table 8.7

Frequency Distributions of Criteria Which Principals Believed Were Currently Used in the Evaluation of Principals (PQ. 15)
(N= 62)

Criteria	f	%f
Job-related skills and knowledge	29	57
Results	26	51
Stakeholder satisfaction	23	45
Leadership ability	21	41
Performance	18	35
Personal qualities	10	20
Other	3	6

Notes:
1. Each principal was asked to identify three criteria. Seven principals provided no response, four were undecided, six identified one criterion, eleven listed two criteria, and ten provided more than three criteria. Only the first three criteria identified have been included resulting in a total of 130 responses.
2. Twelve principals listed more than one aspect of the criteria identified. Only one was used for purposes of identifying each of the requested criteria.
3. Job-related skills and knowledge and results included an extensive list of specific items which will be discussed in the text.
4. "Other" included self-assessments, professional development, and educational philosophy with one mention each.
5. Thirty-four additional mentions of criteria were provided but they are not included in the three selected for each principal. They were (a) stakeholder satisfaction--12 mentions (b) job-related skills and knowledge-- 5 mentions, (c) leadership--5 mentions (d) results--4 mentions, (e) performance--3 mentions, (f) personal characteristics--3 mentions, (g) "context"--history, resources, and situational challenges-- 1 mention, and (h) professional development-- 1 mention.

their school systems in the evaluation of principals. In addition to four general mentions of results, eight specific kinds of results were mentioned: (a) student achievement--11 mentions, (b) reports--3 mentions, (c) accountability--2 mentions, (d) staff performance--2 mentions, and one mention for each of (e) programs, (f) staff morale, (g) a good learning climate, and (h) achievement of school goals. In some cases, mentions of student achievement included specific references to student performance on provincial achievement tests and other provincial tests.

Stakeholder satisfaction received the third highest number of mentions. Of 23 mentions, 19 referred to feedback from staff, parents, students, and the community. Opinions of the board and opinions of the CEO were each listed by two principals. One principal noted that *"rumor and innuendo"* were considered during principal evaluations in that system.

Principals who identified leadership ability referred to different kinds of leadership: instructional leadership--13 mentions, general leadership ability--5 mentions, and one mention for each of collaborative leadership, and moral/religious leadership. With regard to the 13 mentions of instructional leadership, four were general, five were related to improvement of teaching and learning, two to knowledge of and leadership in the curriculum, and one to each of knowledge of and facility in the curriculum and instructional program planning.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, evaluation is intended to measure the performance of an individual against established standards. While most of the criteria already discussed in this section identify areas which will be considered during an evaluation, no specific standards of performance were defined. However, principals did comment on "performance" as a criterion to be considered and some of these mentioned standards. The majority of the 18 mentions of performance referred to the principal's ability to meet expectations of the systems in which they were employed. These included (a) adherence to the policies and procedures of the system, (b) *"falling in line"* with the beliefs of central office personnel,

(c) acceptance of the system's philosophy, and (d) meeting the expectations of central office.

Of 62 principals who completed the questionnaire, 10 noted that personal qualities were considered during principal evaluations in their school systems. Seven different aspects of this criterion were noted: (a) faith, (b) popularity, (c) status as leaders in the system, (d) motivation, (e) vision, (f) individual strengths, and (g) an ability to *"get the job done."*

Policy document analysis cf. principals' perceptions. As mentioned earlier, policy documents provided in Phase One of the study included a number of specific criteria which were identified as aspects of four general criteria. Similarly, responses by principals were classified but the analysis of the questionnaire results provided a list of six criteria. "Results" and "stakeholder satisfaction," which factored significantly into principals' perceptions regarding criteria used by their school systems, were not apparent in any of the policy documents.

The four criteria common to the document analysis and results of the principals' questionnaire are similarly ranked in both instances: (a) job-related skills and knowledge, (b) leadership ability, (c) performance, and (d) personal characteristics.

Criteria identified in the interviews. All five superintendents who were interviewed in Phase Three of the study commented on a selected number of questions designed to clarify issues identified in the document analysis and the questionnaire.

Those superintendents interviewed (SI 10) specifically referred to 15 of the 21 indicators listed in the question. Because these indicators may be aligned with major criteria identified by principals in the questionnaire, superintendents' responses are discussed within this framework.

Of the 21 indicators discussed with superintendents, 7 are related to "results:" (a) general quality of instruction, (b) teacher performance and morale, (c) atmosphere of the school, (d) good school discipline, (e) wide range of school programs, (f) student performance and progress:

test scores, and (g) student behavior. Five of the seven indicators were noted by superintendents interviewed. Three of the five superintendents identified "atmosphere of the school" and "teacher performance and morale" as key indicators of principal performance. One of the three superintendents remarked that an ideal school atmosphere demonstrates a *"climate of efficacy"* where staff act to make a difference in the lives of children on a daily basis. While "teacher performance and morale" was also identified by three superintendents, there were no explanatory comments to accompany these mentions. Other indicators mentioned include (a) general quality of instruction--two mentions, (b) student performance and progress: test scores--two mentions, and (c) student behavior--one mention. One of the superintendents who mentioned consideration of student achievement remarked that the scores are not important in themselves. How the principal uses these results to evaluate program content and delivery provides a strong indicator of principal performance. Student behavior could have been included with the reference to school discipline. The single superintendent who mentioned the importance of student behavior noted that discipline could be considered a "hygiene" factor. While the presence of good discipline does not necessarily contribute to improved performance in a school, poor discipline certainly detracts from the overall performance and atmosphere of the school.

Job-related skills and knowledge encompasses six of the indicators discussed with superintendents in the interview: three related to human relations skills and three to management skills. Human relations skills included a general reference to human relations skills, participative management, and good communications with staff. Human relations skills were identified as a key indicator by three of the five superintendents. One emphasized the need for the principal to be able to work with staff, while another focussed on the importance of conflict resolution skills. Two superintendents mentioned that communication was important but pointed out that this should extend beyond communications with staff because it is important to communicate well with all stakeholders. The importance of participative management was also identified by two principals although no further explanations were offered.

Management skills associated with job-related skills and knowledge included preparing a clear education plan, balancing the budget, and running the organization. Two superintendents commented on the education plan. One of these noted

> *I am not talking about the written document, I'm referring to the ideas and notions that enter into it. Is it a manageable plan or it it just pretty words?*

A balanced budget was mentioned by two superintendents, one of whom remarked that what was more important than a balanced budget was the affect the budget had on the school program:

> *Of course, you don't want someone to mismanage the budget. However, what is more important is the blueprint it represents for the direction of the school. How are issues like literacy or low math results reflected in the organization of the budget?*

Organizational skills were mentioned by only one of the five superintendents. In general, superintendents noted that management skills are important to the smooth functioning of the school, but the efficient management of school operations was considered secondary to the "real reason" the school exists--the education of children.

Four of the indicators identified in the interview list could be classified as belonging to leadership as a criterion: educational leadership, high expectations for staff and student performance, support of professional development for staff, and personal professional growth. The first three of these indicators were each identified by two superintendents, and one superintendent mentioned personal professional development. One superintendent noted that support for professional development for staff is very important. Moreover, principals should model the importance of professional development by personal involvement in professional development activities.

Only one indicator on the list--good judgment--was associated to personal characteristics. While this was identified by only one of the five superintendents, a different superintendent added another personal characteristic which was considered very important in that system--integrity:

> *This is extremely important and sufficient grounds upon which the superintendent may remove a designation if there is evidence that integrity is lacking. We expect our principals to be members of senior staff and in that capacity, integrity is critical.*

Two superintendents mentioned public reaction which is associated with stakeholder satisfaction. Both noted that public reaction could be a problem and principals should be aware of it, but one superintendent added that public reaction *"would not jump out"* during an evaluation.

Adherence to system rules and procedures and not "making waves" could be associated with criteria addressing principal performance. Each was mentioned by one superintendent, but they were not identified as key indicators of principal performance. One superintendent stated that

> *system rules and procedures are nice for me but it is more important that they do those things which are necessary in a given situation.*

Another superintendent remarked that

> *sometimes as a principal you have to make waves to get things done or acquire the resources you need for your students.*

One of the five superintendents summarized discussion on key indicators/criteria considered during performance evaluations by noting that

> *the important ones are those that tie in with teaching because that is what we are all about. The least important are those that focus on the management end of school operations.*

During the interviews, superintendents and principals commented on the degree to which expectations regarding the relative importance of various duties were reinforced with principals and the extent to which levels of competence have been articulated and communicated to principals.

Responses (SI 11.a) regarding the degree to which expectations related to principals' duties varied markedly. Of the five superintendents interviewed, two reported that extensive discussions had been conducted in their systems to ensure that principals were aware of the relative importance of the various duties outlined in job descriptions. One superintendent stated that a role description in that system was in the development stage because role descriptions from four systems that had been amalgamated were being melded into a single document. Another superintendent remarked that very little discussion had been directed to that topic in the last three or four years because many of the internal changes had been precipitated by restructuring. The fifth superintendent indicated a preference for general statements about principals' responsibilities rather than *"minute details for which the principal is responsible."*

Similarly, principals' responses (PI 6.a) varied considerably about the degree to which expectations related to principals' duties. Of the five principals who were interviewed, two indicated that the relative importance of duties in principals' role descriptions was well established and had been communicated. One principal noted that several discussions had occurred over a period of years and that a framework had been developed. The other two principals stated that no action had been taken to establish relative importance. One of these remarked that knowledge about the relative importance of role functions of the principal had been gained mainly through graduate studies.

Superintendents' responses (SI 11.b) regarding the extent to which "acceptable levels of competence" had been articulated and communicated also varied substantially. Of the five superintendents, two remarked that expectations regarding acceptable performance were clearly defined and communicated. One superintendent reported that these were communicated during personal interactions with the principal. The other superintendent stated that these definitions were included in the evaluation documents. Of the remaining three superintendents, one noted that no discussion had been initiated, while a second added that discussions regarding acceptable levels was difficult *"because that is very difficult to quantify."* The other superintendent observed that

> *we are beginning that debate, however, at this time we are not very sophisticated.*

Principals' opinions (PI 6.b) regarding the extent to which acceptable levels of competence had been defined and communicated also varied markedly. Of the five principals interviewed, three remarked that no in-system initiatives on this issue existed. One of these added that such a statement of levels was not needed. Of the two remaining principals, one noted that the system was systematically addressing this issue. The other principal stated that there had been some discussions but that these *"had not gone far enough."*

Criteria Which Should Be Considered in Evaluating Principals

Principals identified criteria which they believed were currently used in their systems for evaluations of principals, as well as criteria which they believed should be used.

Criteria Identified in the Questionnaire (PQ 16)

A maximum of three criteria and one reference to each criterion for each principal are included in the summary provided in Table 8.8.

Job-related skills and knowledge mentioned by 32 principals included these aspects: management skills--18 mentions, and human relations skills--14 mentions. In addition to three general references to management skills, nine specific skills were mentioned a total of 15 times: (a) organizational skills--four mentions, (b) establishing clear goals--two mentions, (c) problem solving--two mentions, (d) personnel management--two mentions, and one mention for each of (e) promoting improvement in administrative practice, (f) implementing change, (g) implementing and monitoring plans, (h) fiscal management, and (i) plant management.

In addition to five general references to human relations skills, principals identified five specific skills: (a) team building--two mentions, (b) demonstrating respect for the dignity of others--two mentions,

Table 8.8

Frequency Distributions of Criteria Which Principals Indicated Should Be Used in the Evaluation of Principals (PQ. 16)

(N= 54)

Criteria	f	%f
Job-related skills and knowledge	32	59
Results	31	57
Leadership ability	27	50
Stakeholder satisfaction	20	37
Personal qualities	12	22
Performance	11	20
Professional development	3	6
Self-assessments	2	4
Educational philosophy	2	4
Unspecified criteria	2	4

Notes: 1. Each principal was asked to identify three criteria. Eight principals provided no response, 4 identified one criterion, 12 identified two, 28 provided exactly three, and 10 provided more than three criteria. Only the first three criteria identified have been included, resulting in a total of 142 responses.

2. Eleven principals listed more than one aspect of the criteria identified. Only one was used for purposes of identifying each of the requested criteria.

3. Unspecified criteria included one mention for each of (a) "jointly established criteria" and (b) jurisdiction policy.

4. Thirty-nine additional mentions were made but not included in the three selected for each principal. They were (a) job-related skills and knowledge--10 mentions, (b) stakeholder satisfaction--9 mentions, (c) results--7 mentions, (d) leadership ability--5 mentions, (e) performance--4 mentions, (f) personal characteristics--3 mentions, and (e) context--one mention.

5. No response was received from eight principals.

(c) communicating to various publics--two mentions, and one mention for each of (d) an ability to work with the community, (e) being a team player, and (f) resolving conflicts.

Of the 62 principals, 31 identified nine results which they believed should be considered in the evaluation of principals: (a) student achievement--11 mentions, (b) achievement of school goals--4 mentions, (c) positive learning climate--3 mentions, (d) growth--2 mentions, (e) staff morale--2 mentions, (f) accountability--2 mentions, and one mention for each of (g) community welfare, (h) clear documentation of a means of evaluation, and (i) staff performance. Principals also made four general mentions of results. "Student achievement" included three mentions of student performance on provincial achievement tests and other provincial tests.

Principals who identified leadership ability referred to three types of leadership in addition to eight mentions of this general criterion: instructional leadership, collaborative leadership, and moral/religious leadership. Of the 19 remaining mentions, 17 were directed to instructional leadership. In addition to seven general references to instructional leadership, improvement of teaching and learning received six mentions, and curriculum leadership and staff development were both mentioned twice. Collaborative and moral/religious leadership each were mentioned once.

Stakeholder satisfaction received the fourth highest number of mentions. Of 20 mentions, 18 referred to feedback from staff, students, parents, and the community. One principal included the acceptance and approval of central office administrators. Another mentioned that *"informed reaction of people in the know"* was a valuable source of information for consideration during principal evaluations.

Besides three general mentions to personal qualities, principals mentioned six specific qualities: (a) faith--3 mentions, and one mention for each of (b) integrity, (c) honesty, (d) creativity, (e) perseverance, and (f) "strengths" which were not defined.

Eleven principals referred to various aspects of performance of role expectations. While three of the references were general in nature, adherence to policies and procedures was mentioned three times, maintaining a portfolio twice, and one mention was made for each of meeting central office expectations, ongoing application of Catholic values, and interactions with staff. The principal who remarked on interactions with staff stated that the extent to which staff are satisfied should be taken into account when principals are evaluated, but he also noted that unsatisfactory circumstances may warrant corrective action by the principal leading to staff dissatisfaction which should not be viewed as a negative factor in principal evaluations.

The remaining five criteria received one to three mentions each.

Criteria Currently Used cf. Criteria Which Should Be Used

The criteria which principals stated should be considered when principal performance is evaluated were generally similar to those criteria which they believed were currently used in their systems. Of the 62 principals who completed the questionnaire, 15 believed that exactly the same criteria which they perceived were currently being used in their system should be used for evaluating principal performance. One principal added the criterion of adherence to system policy.

In addition to differences in the criteria identified, principals' opinions varied substantially regarding the relative importance of criteria and which specific criteria should be used in principal evaluations. "Job-related skills and knowledge" and "results" ranked first and second on both lists. Stakeholder satisfaction and leadership ability exchanged ranks of third and fourth from Table 8.7 to Table 8.8. Whereas slightly more principals believed that stakeholder satisfaction is currently considered than is leadership ability (45% vs. 41%), leadership ability was selected more frequently as a criterion that should be used (50% vs. 37%). Personal qualities and performance also exchanged ranks in the two tables with the differences in mentions being 20% and 35% vs. 22% and 20%. Also, the criteria which principals stated should be used in principal evaluations tended to be slightly more specific and oriented more toward human interactions and subsequent results.

Specific Research Question 4.b

To what extent are current research findings on effectiveness of principals reflected in criteria used by school systems in the evaluation of principals?

As mentioned in Chapter 6, several researchers have discussed characteristics of effective principals which permeate the literature, especially high ratings on variables that relate to organizational tasks, instructional leadership, and concern for relationships. These variables focus on 10 categories of effective principal behaviors: (a) assessment of achievement; (b) improvement of teacher performance; (c) commitment to the development, communication, and attainment of school goals; (d) coordination of stakeholders to facilitate policy development and goal achievement; (e) concern for morale and job satisfaction of staff: (f) provision of instructional leadership; (g) communication with a wide range of publics; (h) acquisition and management of resources; (i) effectiveness in decision-making; and (j) high expectations for instructional effectiveness.

A wide range of specific criteria was identified in the policy documents and in the superintendents' and principals' responses to the questionnaire. Of these specific criteria, 20 are directly linked to the 10 effective principal behaviors cited above. These 10 behaviors are discussed according to (a) numbers of criteria which can be related to them, (b) the numbers of mentions for each criterion, and (c) their representation across mentions in the documents and by superintendents and principals. Principals' responses are restricted to those criteria which they believed were currently being used in their school systems.

Three criteria relating to assessment of achievement were identified in the documents and responses from superintendents and principals: (a) a general mention of results--26 mentions, (b) evaluates student performance--24 mentions, and (c) student achievement--15 mentions. While "evaluates student performance" is most directly linked to this behavior, the other two are outcomes of the behavior and assume that the evaluation has been conducted.

The documents and responses from superintendents and principals mentioned three criteria which address improvement of teacher performance: (a) evaluation of staff--30 mentions, (b) initiates and supports professional development--23 mentions, and (c) fosters the improvement of teaching and learning--7 mentions. Although only "fosters the improvement of teaching and learning" directly relates to the behavior described, the other two criteria enunciate activities which serve to improve teacher performance.

Although three criteria from the three sources correlate with commitment to the development, communication, and attainment of school goals, all were not mentioned by each sources. "Develops goals and objectives" was mentioned in all three sources a total of 33 times. "Implementation and monitoring goals and objectives" was mentioned in the documents and responses from principals 13 times and "achievement of goals and objectives" was mentioned only once by principals.

Three criteria relating to the coordination of stakeholders to facilitate policy development and goal achievement appear in the documents and responses from superintendents and principals: (a) creates a cooperative, collaborative environment--24 mentions, (b) develops a sense of community--4 mentions, and (c) works with the community--one mention. Both "creates a cooperative, collaborative environment" and "develops a sense of community" were mentioned in all three sources. "Works with the community" appeared in only policy documents.

Two of three criteria linked to concern for morale and job satisfaction of staff were identified by all three sources: develops morale--15 mentions, and atmosphere of the school--4 mentions. Support for staff was mentioned 19 times in policy documents. Although, "develops morale" was the only criterion directly related to this behavior, the other two have an effect on teacher morale and job satisfaction.

Reference to instructional leadership appeared in the documents and responses from superintendents and principals 47 times, while communications skills were identified by all three sources a total of 38 times. A single criterion linked to each of the following behaviors appeared only in the policy documents: acquisition and management of resources--30 mentions, effectiveness in decision- making--13 mentions, and high expectations for instructional effectiveness--7 mentions.

However, it was not possible to conclude that evidence from effective principals' research was not used in the evaluation of principals. For example, "performance" may be linked to many of the above if observed principal actions demonstrate the practice of these effective principal behaviors.

Summary

This section presents a summary of the major findings regarding criteria used in the evaluation of principals following the same sequence as was used throughout the chapter.

The majority of superintendents and principals indicated that their school systems had written criteria which were used in the evaluation of principals. However, two of the five superintendents who were interviewed noted that these could be improved.

Of the 41 documents provided, 33 contained statements regarding evaluation criteria. Several of these noted that criteria used for evaluation were taken from role descriptions which had been prepared for school administrators. Criteria related to job-related skills and knowledge, leadership ability, and performance--attention to expectations associated with position role descriptions--were mentioned in over 90% of the documents and criteria related to personal qualities appeared in 73%.

Because evaluation criteria were included in the policy documents provided by superintendents and because superintendents themselves had been involved in selecting these criteria, only principals were asked in the questionnaire to comment on criteria which they believed were used in their school systems. Those criteria most frequently mentioned by principals were related to job-related skills and knowledge, results, stakeholder satisfaction, and leadership ability. In addition to the four criteria mentioned above, principals listed criteria related to performance and personal qualities. Because the only reference to "results" in the documents was that principals should "maximize student achievement" and because "stakeholder satisfaction" was not mentioned in the documents, two alternative conclusions could be drawn: either (a) principals' perceptions about criteria currently used are incorrect, or (b) the documents do not accurately reveal the criteria which are used in evaluations.

The five superintendents interviewed commented on 21 indicators of performance which could be considered when principals are evaluated. Those indicators which were most frequently mentioned were related to either job-related skills or instructional leadership. Indicators linked to results, performance, and personal qualities received the fewest mentions. Superintendents' and principals' responses regarding the degree to which the relative importance of principals' duties had been defined and communicated varied markedly. Similarly, responses about the extent to which acceptable levels of competence had been defined and communicated also varied substantially.

In addition to identifying evaluation criteria which they believed were used in their systems, principals specified criteria which they believed should be used to evaluate principals. Several principals selected the same criteria which they had stated were currently used in their systems. While the numbers and specificity of specific criteria varied in the two lists, the general criteria were ranked similarly. Criteria related to job-related skills and knowledge, results, leadership ability, and stakeholder satisfaction were mentioned most frequently.

Although criteria currently being used in Alberta generally addressed all 10 behaviors associated in the literature with effective principals, not all were identified by all three sources used: documents, superintendents, and principals. Those behaviors best supported by criteria currently in use were (a) assessment of achievement, (b) improve teacher performance, (c) commitment to the development, communication, and attainment of school goals, (d) coordination of staff, students, parents, and other members of the community in establishing policy, setting goals, and designing strategies to facilitate their fulfilment, (e) concern for morale and job satisfaction of staff, (f) provision of instructional leadership, and (g) communication with a wide range of publics. Acquisition and management of resources, effectiveness in decision making, and high expectations for instructional effectiveness were mentioned only in the policy documents.

Chapter 9

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This chapter presents an overview of the study, research design and method, major findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further research and practice.

Overview of the Study

Background

The major purpose of this study was to determine what practices and criteria are used in the selection and evaluation of principals in Alberta and to compare these practices and criteria with recommendations which appear in the literature.

Three major factors contributed to the timeliness of this study:
(a) the changing role of the principal attributed to changing societal expectations, as well as the introduction of site-based management, school councils, and responsibility for teacher evaluations;
(b) restructuring of education in the province resulting in fewer systems with less support from the central office; and (c) insufficient research about selection and evaluation of principals.

A major conclusion of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 is that principals are key determiners of effective schools. Their ability to direct the formation, communication, implementation, and achievement of school goals and objectives is essential if students are to have sound educational experiences. High expectations regarding both staff and student performance coupled with a concern for the environment within which teaching and learning occurs rate highly as factors contributing to satisfactory outcomes.

Role expectations relating to the principal's position have changed significantly over time from that of educational statesman and custodian of societal values to manager of school operations and instructional leader. Recently, the Province of Alberta School Act (Alberta Government, 1994) introduced two changes which have further altered the principal's role. First, school councils were mandated and given the responsibility to advise school administrators on policies relating to various areas of school operation (e.g., student achievement, expenditure of finances, and school management). Second, while many school principals had been involved in the evaluation of professional staff, the new School Act gave them the responsibility for these evaluations. In addition, site-based management which was initiated as part of a restructuring of education in the province in 1995, transferred responsibility to the school level for many management functions previously performed by central office. Also, financial restraints which accompanied the major restructuring included a cap on expenditures for administration which resulted in fewer central office administrators being available to assist principals with management and educational leadership functions.

As Dubin (1991) concluded, principals have, to some degree, become CEOs of their schools, responsible for the educational leadership of the school, daily management of school operations, budgeting and expenditures, relationships with external groups, and maintenance of the physical plant. Moreover, the increasing involvement of school councils has introduced a level of political interaction seldom experienced previously at the school level.

Finally, little research existed in Canada on the important topics of selection and evaluation of principals. Few studies of this nature have been conducted in this province, and most studies regarding selection and evaluation of principals which have been conducted were at least 10 years old. The high degree of response from both superintendents and principals attested to the currency and importance of the subject.

Literature

The salient literature which was reviewed included research on and opinions about school and principal effectiveness, in addition to that on selection and evaluation of principals.

Effectiveness. Evidence of the effectiveness of principals is important to both selection and evaluation. As mentioned in Chapter 2, effective principals tend to receive a high rating on variables that relate to organizational tasks, instructional leadership, and concern for relationships. Moreover, the success of a principal is related closely to the degree to which the principal's perception and discharge of the role match the perceptions and expectations of other members of the educational community.

Selection. Webb, et al. (1994) noted that carefully designed selection practices offered school systems one of the quickest means to provide a solid foundation for the improvement of school services. Castetter (1996) stated that proper recruitment, training, and screening of candidates contribute to a higher degree of success in the selection and placement of new principals. Further, he argued that adequate selection practices could reduce costs associated with less rigorous practices (e.g., additional evaluations, remediation, possible termination of designation, and subsequent recruitment of a replacement).

Evaluation. While proper selection practices are important to ensure that the best candidates are selected for positions of leadership, effective evaluation practices are necessary to ensure that current performance of those in positions of leadership is satisfactory. Three primary purposes for evaluation exist: (a) to improve performance, (b) to collect data to assist in administrative decisions regarding personnel, and (c) to collect data to inform decisions related to organizational effectiveness. While several problems with current practices have been identified and scholars have espoused several solutions, there is little research to support the various approaches promoted. For example, Hart (1992) promoted a "results-based" approach to evaluation, Stufflebeam (1995) advocated a "role- or standards-based" approach, while Heck and Marcoulides (1996) concluded that "best practices" based on effective schools literature provided the most reliable means of assessing performance in order to improve effective leadership.

Method

Data for this study were collected in three phases. In Phase One, 48 of 66 superintendents from school systems in the province who agreed to participate in the study provided copies of policy documents relating to the selection and evaluation of principals in their systems.

In Phase Two, all 66 superintendents and 100 of 195 recently appointed principals identified by superintendents were invited to complete a questionnaire. Of the 66 superintendents, 63 completed questionnaires and 62 of the 100 principals completed usable questionnaires. During Phase Three, five superintendents and five principals were interviewed in order to clarify and expand on issues identified in the analysis of the documents and the questionnaire responses.

Major Findings

The findings are presented in the order of the specific research questions which guided this study, but the questions are not restated: the substance of each question is used as the heading.

Selection

While superintendents in the study recognized the importance of the selection of principals, they also concluded that more attention needed to be given to this process. One superintendent provided this opinion which encapsulates the view of many respondents:

> *It is one of the most important activities we engage in as a school system and yet due to time constraints it is one of the areas we devote the least amount of time to, therefore this is an area that needs further work and development.*

Policies and practices. Several major findings are presented below:

1. Fewer than one-half of school systems in the province have developed policies relevant to the selection of principals.

2. While most superintendents and principals noted that policies and practices were well-communicated in their systems, significant differences existed between the opinions of superintendents and principals in some systems about the efficacy of this communication.

3. Document analysis revealed a variety of technologies used by school systems in the selection of principals. The most frequently

mentioned were recruiting candidates, identifying those involved in the selection process, shortlisting candidates, and interviewing candidates. Results from the superintendents' questionnaire reinforced the importance of shortlisting candidates, collecting and evaluating data, and interviewing candidates.

4. Most superintendents noted that data collected from oral reference checks were more reliable than written reports or references from current or past supervisors.

5. Members of various stakeholder groups are involved in principal selection, however, the greatest level of involvement is during interviews.

6. While most superintendents noted that their systems preferred to hire the best candidate available, the majority of principals believed that their systems preferred to hire internally. Moreover, most principals involved in the study had been hired from within the system.

7. More than one-third of all superintendents registered concern over either the size or quality of the talent pool. Greater workloads, increased politicization of the position, and less respect for those holding administrative positions appeared to be primary reasons why fewer potential candidates are now pursuing administrative positions.

8. Few school systems in the province provided training programs for aspiring administrators. Although many superintendents noted that their systems provided training for new principals, few gave evidence of systematic training programs.

9. Both superintendents and principals tended to believe that contextual variables related to both the school and the community have an influence on the selection process: school needs, cultural or religious orientation of students, community expectations, size and type of school, school philosophy, geography, and local politics. A recurring theme in comments from both groups addressed the importance of the "fit" of the principal to the school and community.

10. Although nearly all superintendents and principals remarked that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with current policies and practices, many respondents from both groups agreed that these changes

could improve practices: increase stakeholder involvement, provide leadership training for prospective candidates, increase the candidate pool, improve the structure and training of the selection committee, expand the scope of the screening process, give more attention to data used, and (g) formalize policy.

11. Despite the general level of satisfaction with current policies and practices expressed by superintendents and principals, practices currently used across the province did not compare well with those recommended in the literature. School systems in the province were rated moderate to low on using five of nine recommended practices. Moreover, the frequency of differences of opinion between superintendents and principals on various issues in the study suggests that more attention should be addressed to communication about selection practices.

However, research on many of the practices recommended in the literature is limited and therefore care must be taken in using these practices as a standard or model for selection of principals. That is, we need to question whether or not school systems are using more effective practices than are recommended in the literature. Also, much of the literature is based on practice and research in the United States. While it may be argued that many practices relating to education are consistent across national and international boundaries, regional differences should and will influence the application of those practices. (These observations are also valid when current evaluation practices are compared with those recommended in the literature.)

Criteria currently used for selection. Several findings are relevant to selection criteria:

1. Most policy documents identified only a few criteria which would be used in the selection process. Many of these criteria were discussed in quite general terms.

2. While appropriate professional preparation and appropriate previous experience were most frequently identified in policy documents as important for consideration during the selection of principals,

superintendents and principals indicated that appropriate job-related skills and knowledge were more important.

3. Most school systems require or prefer that candidates possess some graduate education. However, many recognize that local circumstances may prevent strict adherence to guidelines regarding this requirement. Approximately one-third of superintendents noted that graduate training was required.

4. Most criteria used in the selection of principals related to role descriptions developed for specific positions. Only 13 criteria identified in both policy documents and responses from superintendents and principals could be directly related to effective principal behaviors outlined in Chapter 2.

Evaluation

In general, policy documents relating to the evaluation of principals were more detailed than those relating to selection.

Policies and practices. Several major findings are listed below:

1. Fewer than two-thirds of school systems in the province have developed policies relating to the evaluation of principals.

2. "Promote professional growth and improvement of principals" and "provide information for administrative decisions" were the most frequently mentioned purposes for evaluation in policy documents.

3. Perceptions regarding the importance of purposes for evaluation varied substantially between superintendents and principals. Overall, superintendents indicated a higher level of importance for 9 of the 10 purposes included in the questionnaire than did principals. Of these nine purposes, superintendents accorded five a higher level of importance than the purpose considered most important by principals. The two purposes which superintendents indicated were of highest importance were "promote professional growth and improvement of principal" and "assess the extent to which expectations are being met." In contrast, principals assigned the highest levels of importance to "assess the extent to which expectations are being met" and "improve student performance."

4. Principals were involved in various aspects of planning for

evaluation, but superintendents reported a higher degree of principal involvement than did principals. Principals were most involved in policy development relating to evaluation and least involved in choosing an evaluator.

5. Most systems use a combination of two or more of "results-based," "role description-based," and "best practice-based" approaches to evaluation. While "best-practice-based" was mentioned most frequently in the interviews, no respondent provided clear evidence of the relative importance accorded each approach. In contrast, most of the criteria articulated in policy documents were related to role descriptions.

6. Several systems use self-evaluations as part of the evaluation process, but their use varies markedly. Some systems use them for professional development purposes only, while others use them as an integral component of formal evaluations.

7. Superintendents and principals agreed that evaluation focussed on the aspects of financial management, school planning activities, and student achievement. In addition, superintendents included organizational skills and principals included parent surveys.

8. While most systems have established cycles for evaluation, a number of superintendents remarked that constraints on time and resources were dictating a review of the cycles currently used.

9. Most respondents believed that current practices followed established policy closely.

10. Few respondents reported the existence of remediation programs in their systems for principals who may be experiencing difficulty.

11. Both superintendents and principals noted that contextual variables such as school and system goals, experience of the principal, size and type of school. and nature of the community were considered when principals are evaluated.

12. Most of the 10 administrators interviewed agreed that there should be a connection between evaluation and principal effectiveness, but of these 10 only two principals believed that a connection currently

exists.

13. Most superintendents and principals were either satisfied or very satisfied with current policies and practices related to evaluation.

14. Current policies and practices relating to evaluation compare moderately well with practices recommended in the literature.

Criteria currently used for principal evaluation. Several findings are worthy of consideration:

1. Of 41 policy documents obtained in Phase One of the study, 33 included criteria which would be used in the evaluation of principals.

2. Criteria mentioned most frequently in policy documents related to job-related skills and knowledge, leadership ability, and performance. "Student achievement" was mentioned in fewer than 33% of policy documents which included criteria.

3. In comparison, the five interviewed superintendents most frequently identified indicators related to job-related skills and knowledge and instructional leadership. Indicators relating to results of various types, performance, and personal qualities received the fewest mentions.

4. In contrast, criteria which principals believed were most frequently used (as noted by the number of mentions) related to job-related skills and knowledge, results (including student achievement), stakeholder satisfaction, and leadership ability. Principals also listed criteria which they believed should be used in the evaluation of principals. While the specific criteria listed varied in focus and specificity, they related to the same four general criteria which principals believed were currently used.

5. Although criteria used in Alberta addressed all 10 behaviors associated in the literature with effective principals, not all behaviors were directly linked to criteria identified by all three sources--policy documents, and superintendents' and principals' responses.

Conclusions and Discussion

The discussion of findings and conclusions of the study is organized according to recommended practices for selection and evaluation of principals reviewed in Chapter 2.

Selection

Findings from the study are related to nine major recommended practices and other findings in the literature related to the selection of principals.

Develop written policies. Fewer than one-half of school systems in Alberta had developed policy documents relating to the selection of principals. Further, detail provided in these documents about practices and criteria used varied markedly. For example, some policy documents restricted discussion to the identification of advertising practices, who was involved in short-listing and interviewing candidates, and who was responsible for the selection decision. Others were very detailed in their description of practices and criteria which are used. Anderson (1991) argued that written policies provide evidence to the community, staff, and prospective candidates of the board's commitment to hire the best individuals possible and the goals and objectives that the board wishes to achieve. In addition, Castetter (1996) noted that policies establish procedural guidelines which selectors will follow in the process. Although the majority of the policy documents analyzed in the study outlined such procedural guidelines, only a few included statements of the board's intent to hire good leaders and very few included statements about goals the board wished to achieve.

Conduct intensive job analyses. Both Anderson (1991) and Castetter (1996) have noted that position analyses assist in the establishment of requirements for a particular position which enhances the probability of "fit" between the individual hired and the school. Although some school systems noted that positions are reviewed prior to recruitment and selection of new principals, very little evidence in the study supported a conclusion that most school systems in the province follow a similar procedure. In particular, five school systems reported the use of formal "school profiles" which include statements regarding the school's philosophy, mission, focus, and other details regarding the school and community which may assist in effecting the best match between the school and a prospective principal.

Create a pool of qualified candidates. While most school systems in the province advertise extensively, few actively recruit potential administrators to ensure that future needs will be met. This practice generally assumes the existence of a pool of qualified candidates. However, some larger systems conduct training programs for aspiring administrators to develop and maintain an adequate pool of qualified candidates. These programs also assist in socializing prospective administrators to the philosophy and management style of the system. Despite current processes used, a substantial number of superintendents expressed concern with the size and quality of the talent pool. While this finding contrasts with that of Baltzell and Dentler (1983) that an "over supply" of potential candidates exists, it confirms the more recent predictions by Pounder (1994) and Levin and Young (1994) of a possible shortfall later this decade.

However, the reasons for this shortfall in Alberta vary from those anticipated by these authors. Whereas they predicted a shortfall based on anticipated resignations due to an aging population, the study appears to indicate that this situation may be exacerbated by a reluctance of qualified candidates to pursue administrative opportunities because of factors associated with a perceived "undesirability" of the principalship. Further, Anderson (1991) and Castetter (1996) emphasized the importance of establishing a talent pool through active recruitment and training. Current principals are in an excellent position to assess administrative potential and advise promising prospects to enrol in training programs. Castetter concluded that "well-designed recruiting programs result in greater employee commitment, higher productivity, and higher quality of work " and have the potential to avoid "costly personnel problems such a position-person mismatches, ineffective performance, undue supervision, absenteeism, lateness, turnover, antiorganization behavior, unwarranted tenure, and personnel litigation" (p. 87).

Develop specific selection criteria. Both Anderson (1991) and

Castetter (1996) have commented on the importance of the identification and use of specific criteria in the selection of principals. Most superintendents in the study stated that their systems have specific criteria which are used in the selection of principals. However, criteria found in policy documents varied markedly in scope and detail. Musella and Lawton (1986) reported that the criteria considered most important for the selection of principals were human relations skills, knowledge of the position, and "appropriate" philosophy. In contrast, this study revealed that policy documents most frequently mentioned "appropriate professional preparation" and "appropriate previous experience." Superintendents and principals highlighted "job-related skills and knowledge" which included human relations skills. Although superintendents and principals agreed with Hart and Bredeson (1996) that contextual factors of the school and community influence both the choice of criteria and practices used in the selection of principals, very few policy documents provided evidence that desirable criteria should be related to unique school or community characteristics. Also, very few policy documents included statements regarding standards or levels of performance associated with expected competencies even though Stufflebeam (1995) and Castetter have argued that defined standards of performance should be established for each criterion used.

Identify the specific opening in vacancy announcements. While policy documents were not specific about how positions were advertised, interviews with superintendents revealed that care is taken to identify the specific vacancy. Detailed information regarding the size, location, and specific features of the school is also frequently included. Because some systems fill vacancies internally other vacancies are created. Often, these vacancies are advertised in the same manner that was used with the initial vacancy, however additional advertising costs associated with vacancies created through internal transfers sometimes leads to alternative means of filling these positions. Although these findings differ substantially from those of Musella (1983) and Baltzell and Dentler (1983) that most advertisements are general in nature to allow for internal transfers, they support Anderson's (1991) recommendation that specific openings be identified.

Involve a broad base of people in screening and selection. Musella and Lawton (1986) found very little involvement of stakeholders in the selection process. In contrast, many systems in Alberta involve stakeholders, although some still rely on administrators to short-list, interview, and recommend candidates for board approval. Selection committees described in the study were more frequently involved in interviewing candidates, while short-listing was still primarily conducted by central office administrators. In most cases, administrators, trustees, or a combination of these made the selection decision. Harris and Monk (1992) and Anderson (1991) offer support for stakeholder involvement by suggesting that multiple perceptions of candidate acceptability are more accurate than the perceptions of a single evaluator.

Train individuals on selection committees. Very little evidence in the study suggested that serious consideration is given by school systems in the province to training for those involved in the selection process. While this finding is consistent with those of other researchers (e.g., Baltzell and Dentler, 1983: Morgan, Hall, and Mackay, 1983; and Musella and Lawton, 1986), more recent literature (e.g., Anderson, 1991; Castetter, 1996; and Pounder & Young 1996) has emphasized the value of training those involved in the selection of principals.

Use multiple means of assessment. The study revealed that analysis of written documentation and interview responses were the most frequently used means of assessing candidate acceptability. Of these, interview data were considered most important despite weaknesses associated with interviews (see Chapter 2). Because of these weaknesses, Castetter (1996) and Anderson (1991) advocated the use of a range of assessment activities, including simulations, various forms of testing (e.g., aptitude, intelligence, interest, achievement, and personality), and assessment centres. Musella and Lawton (1986) further argued that school systems should rely less on means which rely on subjective judgments. Only 11 superintendents who completed the questionnaire reported alternative means of assessing principals. One noted the use of the Gallup Principal Perceiver and 10 indicated that various simulation exercises (e.g., in-basket exercises) were used. In addition, Castetter (1996), Harris and Monk (1992), and Pounder and Young (1996) have stated that the reliability of interview data may be enhanced through the use of structured interviews.

Consider varied sources of information about candidates. The primary sources of data used by school systems in Alberta to evaluate candidates were resumes, references, and interviews. However, in light of the importance of the principalship, several experts (e.g., Anderson, 1991; Castetter, 1996: and Pounder & Young, 1996) have suggested that other sources of data should be included. For example, on-site visits, student achievement data, and previous performance reports can provide valuable information for the selection process. One superintendent in the study reported that "job-shadowing" was incorporated as part of the selection process.

Other. In addition to findings related to recommended practices, other findings from the study support observations from the literature. For example, Musella (1983) indicated that, in times of economic restraint, public attention centres on education costs and questions regarding the effectiveness of schools and staff. This observation is consistent with the events in Alberta. In the five years prior to this study, government and public attention was focussed on the economic status of the province and public services (including education) have been subject to examination of economic "efficiencies" and effectiveness of programs being offered. While policy documents included very little reference to outcomes and no reference to stakeholder satisfaction, results from the questionnaire indicated that superintendents and principals were quite aware of the influence of both of these criteria in the selection process.

Evaluation

Findings from the study are related to nine recommended practices and other findings in the literature related to the evaluation of principals.

Identify the purposes for evaluation. Of the 41 policy documents provided by superintendents, 31 contained statements identifying two to seven purposes for evaluation. The two purposes which superintendents indicated were of highest importance were "promote professional growth and improvement of principal" and "assess the extent to which expectations are being met." In contrast, principals assigned the highest levels of importance to "assess the extent to which expectations are being met" and "improve student performance." Cammaert (1987) also found a disparity between principals' and superintendents' perceptions regarding the purposes for evaluation in Alberta school systems. Professional growth, assessment of competencies, goal setting, and self-reflection are supported by the literature (e.g. Anderson, 1991: Castetter, 1996, Heck & Marcoulides, 1996; and Sergiovanni 1995). However, Anderson noted that those involved in evaluations must understand and agree to the purposes identified. Differences in opinions between superintendents and principals suggest that more discussion is necessary to ensure that the purposes for evaluation are clearly understood.

Develop clear performance expectations. Most of the policy documents and responses from superintendents and principals provided lists of criteria which were used in the evaluation of principals, but very few included discussion of standards of performance expected in these areas. This is consistent with Cammaert's (1987) findings in Alberta in an earlier study. In contrast, many researchers (e.g., Anderson, 1991; Castetter, 1996; Stufflebeam, 1995; and Stufflebeam and Nevo, 1993) have argued that, in addition to the identification of desirable attitudes, behaviors, and skills, definite expectations related to all levels of performance should be established and communicated.

Involve principals in planning. Anderson (1991) and Castetter (1996) have observed that research indicates that principal involvement in planning evaluation policies and practices enhances the degree of understanding and acceptance of the process. Although the study revealed that principals were involved in five planning activities related to evaluations, they were most involved in development of policy and least involved in choosing their own evaluator. Other areas of involvement included establishing criteria for their own evaluation, deciding on who provides information for their own evaluation, and deciding on time schedules for their own evaluation. While both superintendents and principals reported principal involvement in planning, superintendents consistently identified a higher level of principal involvement than did principals.

Encourage goal setting and self-reflection. Many systems have incorporated self-evaluations as part of the evaluation process. In addition, principals are required to establish school and personal goals, identify how progress will be assessed, and report on outcomes. This finding is consistent with recommendations by both Anderson (1991) and Castetter (1996) who advocated that principals should engage in the establishment of personal and professional goals and ongoing self-evaluation of progress toward those goals.

Frequently observe principals in action. In 1987, Cammaert reported that principals believed that supervision and evaluation of principals would be more effective if superintendents could spend more time in schools. While both superintendents and principals in this study commented on the importance of direct supervision, reduced complements of superintendency staff and increased workloads have reduced the amount of direct contact with principals. Several superintendents reported that regular evaluation cycles were either being eliminated or the time between evaluations was being increased. However, Hallinger and Murphy (1985) stated that the major contributing factor to the success of "effective" school systems in their study was the amount of time central office personnel dedicated to direct contact with the school and the school administration. Anderson (1991) also affirmed that research demonstrated that the evaluation and supervision of principals were improved when supervisory personnel were able to devote adequate time working with and observing principals.

Involve peers and teachers in providing feedback. Most superintendents and principals in the interviews observed that feedback from staff was used in evaluations. This finding is consistent with Anderson's (1991) recommendation that the principal's peers and teachers on staff should be involved in providing feedback for principal evaluations.

Collect artifacts. Anderson (1991) and Castetter (1996) have expressed the view that various artifacts such as copies of school handbooks, newsletters, student records, reports to central office, and test results provide useful data for a principal evaluation. However, Anderson argued that the effectiveness of these data depended on early identification of what data would be collected and how they would be used. Findings from this study are consistent with Anderson and Castetter's recommendation. In addition to evidence collected by direct observation, evaluators in the province have collected some of the following information as feedback on principal performance: annual reports, student results, financial data, portfolios, and school planning documents.

Adopt a cyclical approach to evaluation. While nearly all systems use a cyclical approach to evaluation, some are considering alternative methods because of constraints imposed by limited time and available personnel. This contrasts with the recommendation from several experts (e.g., Anderson, 1991; Castetter, 1996; and Provus, 1974) that evaluation should be an ongoing cyclical process. Both Provus (see Figure 2.5) and Castetter note that feedback cycle from the final step in the evaluation process leads directly into the next cycle of evaluation.

Reward outstanding performance. Although Anderson (1991) remarked that exemplary performance in positions of leadership should be rewarded, responses from both superintendents and principals indicated that very little attention is given in school systems in Alberta to "special recognition" of principal performance. Anderson observed that merit programs are difficult to design and administer and suggested that school systems could explore other means of recognizing excellence such as public ceremonies and attendance at special conferences.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study on policies and practices related to selection and evaluation of principals in Alberta identified several other questions which should be addressed:

1. What policies and practices are used in the selection and evaluation of principals in other Canadian provinces? There is very little recent literature on practices relating to the selection and evaluation of principals in Canada.

2. To what extent and in which ways will the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (Alberta) influence policies and practices associated with selection and evaluation of principals? This legislation has the potential for significantly affecting practices relating to both the selection and evaluation of principals. However, no evidence was obtained in the study to indicate that school systems have addressed this issue.

3. To what extent and in which ways do highly structured selection practices provide more satisfactory outcomes than less rigorous methods? Limited resources often force school systems to employ less rigorous practices. If outcomes of these practices are not significantly less desirable (e.g., more costly in terms of necessary termnation or less acceptable educational outcomes) than those of more sophisticated processes, school systems need not incur the additional costs associated with more rigorous practices.

4. Which selection and evaluation practices used in the public administration, private, and non-profit sectors could be adapted with benefit for the selection and evaluation of school principals? There is a substantial body of research relating to the selection of administrators outside of the educational sector which may provide valuable insight into selection of principals.

5. To what extent and in which ways do changing roles of principals contribute to the size and quality of the candidate pool? Current concerns regarding the available talent pool appear to indicate

that the changing role of the principal has had an influence on whether potential candidates pursue a career in administration. Further research could verify this relation, identify which factors contribute toward a reluctance to pursue administration, and suggest means of improving the talent pool.

6. Which of the current approaches to evaluation advocated by researchers is best suited for various purposes of evaluation (e.g., improvement of performance, personnel actions, organizational improvement)? Little evidence was obtained from the study which would indicate that different approaches to evaluation are employed for the different formative and summative purposes mentioned in policy documents. However, the literature suggests that the practice of evaluation should suit the purpose of evaluation and recognize situational factors which influence principal performance.

7. To what extent and in which ways do self-evaluations perform the purposes for evaluation which are articulated in school system policies? Evidence from the study indicates that self-evaluations are used for a variety of purposes in systems across the province. In some systems, self-evaluations are intended as a professional development activity. In other systems, self-evaluations are an integral part of formal evaluations. Further research could provide valuable insight into the best use of self-evaluations.

8. To what extent and in which ways does evaluation contribute to improved principal performance? While superintendents and principals who were interviewed agreed that a connection between performance evaluations and improved performance should exist, opinions regarding a current connection varied markedly. Additional research into this critical connection would be valuable.

Recommendations and Models for Selection and Evaluation of Principals

Several recommendations for practice based on the findings of this study and the literature are provided below.

Selection

As reported in Chapter 5, 97% of the superintendents and 90% of principals who completed the questionnaire were either satisfied or very satisfied with the practices used to select principals. Nevertheless, several recommendations are warranted.

Any recommendation regarding the relative value of selecting internal candidates instead of external (or vice-versa) would not be appropriate because of the subjective nature of existing needs with a school or school system.

1. Because not all of the Alberta school systems had developed policy documents related to the selection of principals, and because a considerable range of detail existed in these documents regarding practices and criteria, all school systems in the province should consider the establishment of adequate relevant policy. Long-range system and school goals (see Figure 2.2) should be reviewed during the developmental stage to ensure that policies and pracices consider the long-term needs of the system.

2. In addition to policy development, school systems should incorporate extensive position analyses and development of school and position profiles as part of the preselection phase of the process. Details regarding the specific needs and character of the school and community can assist in the establishment of criteria which are necessary to expedite the selection of the best person for the position.

3. In light of concerns regarding the size and quality of the talent pool, school systems should give consideration to the identification and recruitment of potential candidates for administrative positions. This should involve both central office staff and current principals. For example, systems could prepare detailed information booklets about the work of principals and associated preservice and inservice education.

4. School systems are also encouraged to develop training programs to prepare aspiring administrators to assume positions of leadership in the system. In addition, school systems should consider formalized training sessions for new administrators. Internships,

mentoring, and formal workshops are possibilities to explore. Although smaller systems may find such activities too costly as an independent project, local consortia and affiliation with programs already established by larger systems offer viable alternatives. General training for new administrators should focus on the development and enhancement of administrative skills necessary to function in the principalship. In addition, individual systems must provide in-system induction to inform new administrators of the system's mission, goals, and operating procedures.

5. Because screening interviews continue to be the primary means of data collection for the employment decision, school systems should consider the use of more structured interview formats to increase the validity and reliability of data collected. However, school systems are also encouraged to use other means of assessing candidates (e.g., on-site visits at the candidate's current place of employment, simulations, and written exercises).

6. While school systems are encouraged to increase stakeholder involvement in the selection process, the activities in which they are involved and the amount of preparation they receive needs more attention. The literature has emphasized the importance of training selectors, but it has also noted that training does not eliminate some of the negative factors associated with selection committees (e.g., selector bias, and insufficient understanding of needs). Therefore, most stakeholder involvement should be limited to activities such as the development of system mission statements, planning, and the development of position and person profiles. Because participant involvement at later stages is susceptible to subjective personal perceptions and situational variables, stakeholder involvement should be restricted to those who have been adequately trained.

7. Because efficiently operated schools are not necessarily effective schools, more attention should be placed on using criteria which focus on effective principal behaviors which are identified in the literature.

8. Because selection and evaluation are two facets of the human

resource management continuum, more attention should be given to the connection between policies, practices, and criteria used in each process. Those skills, abilities, and characteristics which are assessed to determine acceptability of performance should be the same skills, abilities, and characteristics which are valued in the selection process.

Figure 9.1. presents a comprehensive model for the selection of principals which includes some of the eight aspects listed above. This model reflects recommendations from the literature, data obtained in the study, and convictions based on personal experience. Most systems in Alberta focus on five steps identified in the model: assessment of documents, interviews with candidates, assessment of candidates, seeking more information, and selection. In many systems, recruitment is restricted to advertising vacant positions. Because of the evolving role of the principal, changing demands on education, and increasing involvement of stakeholders in education, schools systems should give more attention to the other facets of the process. The establishment of long-range goals for both the school and the system will assist in identifying areas of expertise which will be required in the future. Once goals have been established, systems should conduct personnel inventories to determine the match between current expertise and future needs. Deficiencies identified in this comparison will serve to guide recruitment. Further, the use of position and school profiles increases the probability of "fit" between the new principal and the school and community. Also, recruiting and training prospective administrators is important to the development and maintenance of effective schools. Several authors (e.g., Anderson, 1991; and Castetter, 1996) have suggested that data should be collected from a variety of sources. Therefore, in addition to the traditional means of collecting data, the model suggests on-site visits to observe the candidate in action. Despite the comprehensive nature of the model, constraints such as those identified will affect the manner in which each step is executed. Therefore, care must be exercised to minimize the potential negative influence these constraints. Also, feedback from the process may be used

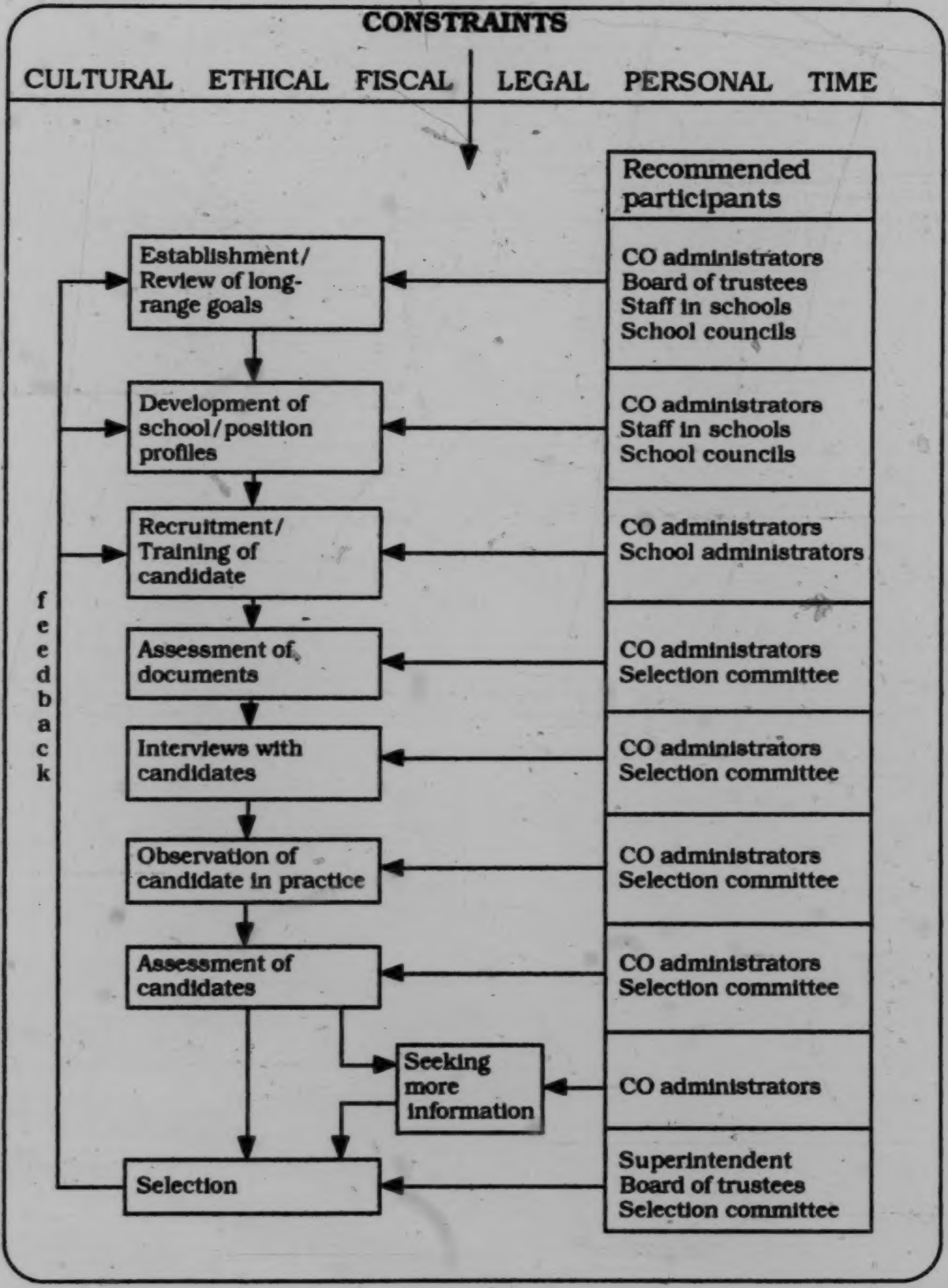
CONSTRAINTS
CULTURAL
ETHICAL
FISCAL
LEGAL
PERSONAL
TIME
Recommended participants
Establishment/ Review of long-range goals
CO administrators
Board of trustees
Staff in schools
School councils
Development of school/position profiles
CO administrators
Staff in schools
School councils
Recruitment/ Training of candidate
CO administrators
School administrators
Assessment of documents
CO administrators
Selection committee
Interviews with candidates
CO administrators
Selection committee
Observation of candidate in practice
CO administrators
Selection committee
Assessment of candidates
CO administrators
Selection committee
Seeking more information
CO administrators
Selection
Superintendent
Board of trustees
Selection committee
feedback

Figure 9.1 Model for the Process of Selection of Principals.

to modify the early steps of the process.

Evaluation

1. Because fewer than two-thirds of school systems in the province have developed policies relating to the evaluation of principals and because a wide range of details regarding procedures and criteria were provided in policy documents, school systems in the province need to review and revise and, where necessary, establish adequate policy. Figure 2.6 provides a useful framework for consideration of factors which influence the evaluation process.

2. Each policy should clearly outline the purposes for evaluation important to the system and evaluation practices which will be used to achieve each purpose.

3. Because evaluation is increasingly linked to results, school systems need to identify which results which will be assessed and communicate this information to the principal well in advance of proposed evaluations. Other criteria which will be assessed must also be clearly stated.

4. Because superintendents' and principals' perceptions regarding purposes and practices differed markedly, more attention should be given to communicating the content and intent of system policies.

5. School systems should consider establishing "standards of performance" associated with each of the "results" and "criteria" identified above. These standards should clearly establish acceptable levels of performance in each area of responsibility. While there may be a concern that such standards would limit the level of performance, this researcher believes that multiple levels of standards associated with performance would facilitate continuing growth. These standards must be clearly communicated to principals.

6. Because restricted sources of data may lead to incorrect conclusions, school systems are encouraged to collect data from a number of sources. In addition to the collection of "hard" data (e.g., budget figures and achievement scores) and feedback from stakeholders, research emphasizes the importance of direct observation by supervisors.

7. In the light of extensive lists of responsibilities included in role

descriptions for principals, school systems should prioritize each of these responsibilities. The purpose of such priorization is to assist principals to give particular attention to those activities and outcomes which are most important to the system.

8. While attention to achieving specific "results" and completing assigned responsibilities is important to the discharge of principal responsibilities, these do not necessarily contribute to school effectiveness. Therefore, school systems are encouraged to give more attention to those behaviors which the literature on effective schools and effective principals has identified as relating to principal effectiveness.

9. Because the effectiveness of the school and the principal are closely related, school systems should consider integrating principal evaluations with school evaluations.

10. School systems should review policies and practices in view of the implications of the Freedom of Information and Privacy of Information Act (1993).

Figure 9.2 provides a comprehensive model for the evaluation of principals. Several of these 10 aspects are addressed in the figure which illustrates the continuous nature of evaluation. This model is based on recommendations from the literature, data obtained in the study, and insights gained from personal experience. The recommended participants for the various functions have not been included in Figure 9.2. Obviously, central office staff and the principals will be involved in most functions, while relevant others (e.g., teachers) may be involved in some functions.

Fundamental to evaluation is the planning process which includes five important activities: (a) establishing purposes for evaluation, (b) determining criteria to be assessed, (c) determining acceptable performance standards for each of the criteria chosen, (d) determining means of measuring/assessing performance, and (e) deciding who will be involved in the evaluation process. Because each situation and person is unique, the end result of each of these activities will be different for each evaluation.

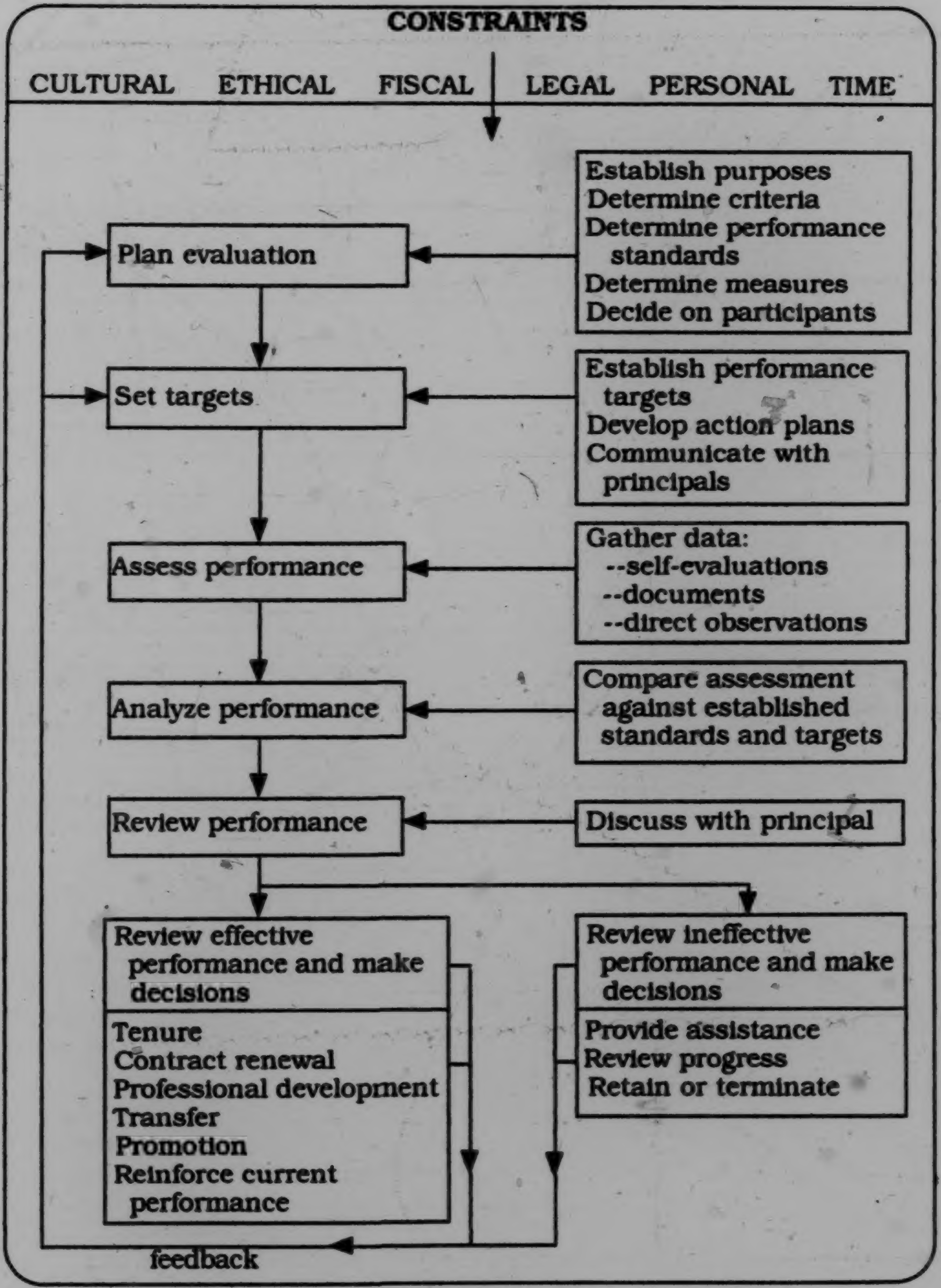
CONSTRAINTS
CULTURAL
ETHICAL
FISCAL
LEGAL
PERSONAL
TIME
Plan evaluation
Establish purposes
Determine criteria
Determine performance standards
Determine measures
Decide on participants
Set targets
Establish performance targets
Develop action plans
Communicate with principals
Assess performance
Gather data:
--self-evaluations
--documents
--direct observations
Analyze performance
Compare assessment against established standards and targets
Review performance
Discuss with principal
Review effective performance and make decisions
Tenure
Contract renewal
Professional development
Transfer
Promotion
Reinforce current performance
Review ineffective performance and make decisions
Provide assistance
Review progress
Retain or terminate
feedback

Figure 9.2 Model for the Process of Evaluation of Principals.

Similarly, personal and school performance targets will vary with each evaluation. These should be established on a regular basis and communicated to appropriate stakeholders.

While assessing principal performance, data should be collected from a number of sources. Figure 9.2 suggests three. First, individual principals should engage in ongoing self-evaluations related to the purposes of evaluation stated in policy and reflected in mission and goal statements of the school system. Second, data relating to outcomes obtained from budget documents, achievement scores, satisfaction surveys, and annual school reports should be analyzed. Third, superintendents or designates should be directly engaged in observation and supervision of principals' performance. Feedback from direct observation helps to validate personal perceptions gained through self-reflection and will mediate judgments based on the analysis of other data obtained. Further, ongoing contact between supervisors and evaluatees serves to clarify and reinforce system goals, important criteria, and standards of performance.

During the analysis of data collected, performance and outcomes are measured against targets and standards of performance established before the process began. When discrepancies occur between performance and expectations, it is necessary to reflect on the reasons for these discrepancies. Discrepancies may be attributed to at least three factors. First, individual performance may not be satisfactory. The principal may be incapable of achieving or unwilling to work toward the achievement of established standards and targets. Second, the targets or standards established at the beginning of the process may not have been realistic. Third, external forces may have intervened to reduce the effectiveness of the individual's performance. Conclusions based on any of these three factors will significantly affect the formal report of principal performance and influence recommendations for future action. Finally, results from the assessment should be reviewed in detail with the principal.

The degree of formality and the effectiveness with which evaluations are conducted may be influenced by several constraints. Insufficient time and personnel will determine the frequency of evaluations and the comprehensiveness of the process. Other constraints (e.g., legal, personal, ethical, and cultural) may influence the choice of criteria, standards of performance, and the manner in which they are assessed.

As mentioned earlier, data collected during evaluations provide information for administrative decisions. Decisions regarding tenure, contract renewal, transfers, promotions, and professional development depend on determinations of effectiveness of performance. On the other hand, if performance is assessed to be ineffective, assistance should be provided in an attempt to overcome deficiencies in performance. This remediation would then be followed by a further review leading to either retention or termination.

As noted in Figure 9.2, the review of performance begins the cycle again with the setting of new targets or a review of some planning activities (e.g., standards of performance). Provus (1971) argued that discrepancies between standards of performance and actual performance could result from either poor performance or unrealistic expectations of performance. Both should therefore be examined before summative decisions are made.

Concluding Statement

After conducting this study, I gained the distinct impression that many school systems have carefully developed policies for the selection and evaluation of principals but that they lacked the resources to properly address implementation. Other systems have either directed limited resources to "actions" related to selection and evaluation instead of the rigorous work of sound policy development, or searched for means to "satisfice" in both areas. What has become increasingly evident is that, if practices related to selection and evaluation are to be improved, additional resources must be available. There are three possible ways to ensure that these resources are available. First, school systems may have to set aside some other mandated activities to free supervisors to perform these important functions. Second, the government should provide more funding for school systems to enable them to achieve all of the expectations which have been established for them. Third, a combination of additional funding by the government and the rearrangement of school system priorities could help to provide all or some of the necesary resources.

In relation to evaluation, Duke and Richard (1985) observed that practices could be improved but until evaluation becomes a priority serious attempts at improvement should not be made. In the current climate which emphasizes accountability and school effectiveness, school systems in Alberta and elsewhere must give more attention to selection and evaluation of principals. Without sufficient resources, the effort expended may result in little improvement.

Regardless of how carefully policies and practices dealing with selection and evaluation of principals have been enunciated in school systems, they both heavily depend on human judgment. Those involved in these activities have the responsibility for ensuring that these human judgment decisions are made as equitably and rationally as possible.

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Appendix A

Data Collection Instruments

Selection and Evaluation of Principals

Superintendent Survey

SUPERINTENDENT SURVEY

WHEN SPACES ARE GIVEN TO THE RIGHT OF A QUESTION, PLEASE RESPOND TO EACH CHOICE WITH A CHECK [✓].

PART 1: SELECTION PRACTICES

1. To what extent are policies and practices concerning the selection of principals communicated throughout your school system?

   (a) extensively ___ (b) selectively ___ (c) not at all ___

2. In your opinion, which of the following positions is characteristic of your school system?

   (a) preference to select principals from within the school system ___
   (b) preference to select principals from outside the school system ___
   (c) preference to select the best candidate regardless of current employment ___

3. Which of the following components does your school system include in the selection process? Who is involved at each step in the process?

Component	Check [✓] if part of your selection process	Who is involved? (Please provide titles of people.)
Collecting relevant data (e.g., resume, references)		(Not required)
Checking the accuracy of data received		(Not required)
Conducting simulated exercises		(Not required)
Short-listing candidates		
Interviewing candidates		
Selecting the successful candidate		
Other (please list) 1. 2.		

4. (a) Have you been satisfied with the quality of the candidate pool during recent attempts to select principals? Yes ___ No ___

   (b) If "No", to what factors do you attribute the reluctance of qualified candidates to apply?

   ____
   ____
   ____

5. Have workshops been arranged by your school system to assist those involved in the selection process?

   (a) no .... ___
   (b) yes, but they were not thorough.......... ___
   (c) yes, and they were very thorough.......... ___

6. (a) Does your jurisdiction use specific criteria in the selection of school principals?
   Yes ___ No ___

   (b) Who developed these criteria?

   ____
   ____
   ____

   (c) Which of these criteria are considered by your school system in the selection process? (Check [✓] all that are applicable.)

   appropriate previous experience................................ ___
   relevant education.. ___
   good match to school.. ___
   good match to community.. ___
   high level of previous performance............................ ___
   highly motivated.. ___
   acceptable statement of educational philosophy....... ___
   appropriate job-related skills and knowledge............. ___
   pleasing personality.. ___
   good performance in previous selection interviews in your system... ___
   Other (please specify)
   ______________________.............................. ___
   ______________________.............................. ___

   (d) What do you consider are the three most important criteria which should be used in the selection of school principals?
   (1) ______________________________
   (2) ______________________________
   (3) ______________________________

7. In your opinion, how do the following aspects rank in order of importance in providing data for evaluation of candidates? **(Use 1 for highest rank, 2 for second highest, etc.)**

   ___ letter of application and resume
   ___ experience
   ___ references (including reference checks)
   ___ written reports from current/past supervisors
   ___ performance in interviews
   ___ other (please specify) ______________________
   ___ ______________________

8. Do you, as superintendent, use the practice of informing successful candidates about the specific reason(s) why they were selected?

Yes ___ No ___

9. What is the policy of your school system with respect to graduate education (e.g., MEd.) as a prerequisite for employment of a principal?

____
____
____
____
____
____

10. Does your school system have either of these programs?

(a) pre-selection candidate leadership training Yes ___ No ___
(b) new principal in-service training Yes ___ No ___

If "Yes", please either provide a brief description of the programs or send a document.

(a) leadership training ______________________________
____
____
____
____

(b) in-service training ______________________________
____
____
____
____

11. In your opinion, do either of the following affect the application of the policy for the selection of principals for some particular schools in your school system?

(a) characteristics of the school Yes ___ No ___
(b) nature of the community Yes ___ No ___

If "Yes", please provide a brief explanation.
(a) school ______________________________________
____
____
____
(b) community ___________________________________
____
____
____

12. (a) To what extent are you satisfied with the process currently used by your school system for selecting principals?

very satisfied................ ___
satisfied........................ ___
dissatisfied................... ___
very dissatisfied............ ___

(b) What would you like to be changed in the process?

____
____
____
____
____
____

13. Please provide any other information or opinions that you consider to be relevant to the topic of selection of principals.

____
____
____
____
____
____
____
____
____
____
____
____

PART 2: EVALUATION PRACTICES

14. To what extent are policies and practices concerning the evaluation of principals communicated throughout your school system?

(a) extensively............... ___
(b) selectively .... ___
(c) not at all .... ___

15. Please rate the importance of these purposes for evaluation of principals. (Place one check [✓] in each row.)

Purpose	Importance in your school system			
	No 0	Slight 1	Moderate 2	High 3
Promote professional growth and improvement of principals				
Identify areas for professional development				
Identify appropriate criteria and standards for evaluation				
Clarify and communicate role expectations				
Assess the extent to which expectations are being met				
Improve student performance				
Provide public accountability				
Provide evidence for special recognition				
Provide information for promotion				
Provide evidence for termination of administrative designation				
Other (please specify) 1. 2.				

16. Does your school system involve principals in planning any of the following activities related to their performance evaluations?

	Yes	No
(a) input into development of policy about evaluation of principals.. ...	___	___
(b) selecting their own evaluator.................................	___	___
(c) establishing criteria for their own evaluation........	___	___
(d) deciding on time lines for their own evaluation......	___	___
(e) deciding on who provides information for their own evaluation..	___	___
(f) other (please specify)		
________________________________..............	___	___
________________________________..............	___	___

17. Which of the following aspects are either used or considered in your school system when principals are being formally evaluated? (Check [✓] all that apply.)

staff surveys......................... ___
student surveys..................... ___
parent surveys....................... ___
student achievement............. ___
financial management........... ___
school planning activity........ ___
self-evaluations..................... ___
religious faith........................ ___
recommendations from
previous evaluations.......... ___
overall organizational skills... ___
other (please specify)
________________............ ___
________________............ ___

18. What is the title of the individual responsible for preparing the formal evaluation report on principals in your school system?

____

19. What special circumstances or conditions, if any, are taken into account in evaluating principals in your school system?

____
____
____
____
____
____

20. (a) Does your school system have a formal remediation program for principals needing assistance?

Yes ___ No ___

(b) If "Yes" please describe.

____
____
____
____
____

21. (a) Do principal evaluations in your school system follow a regular cycle?

Yes ___ No ___

(b) If "Yes" please identify the cycle:

every year............................. ___
every 2 years......................... ___
every 3 years......................... ___
every 4 or more years........... ___
as needed............................. ___

22. (a) To what extent are you satisfied with the process currently used in the evaluation of principals in your school system?

very satisfied................ ___
satisfied....................... ___
dissatisfied................... ___
very dissatisfied............ ___

(b) What would you like to be changed in the process?

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23. Please provide any other information or opinions that you consider to be relevant to the topic of evaluation of principals.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

Selection and Evaluation of Principals

Principal Survey

PRINCIPAL SURVEY

WHEN SPACES ARE GIVEN TO THE RIGHT OF A QUESTION, PLEASE RESPOND TO EACH CHOICE WITH A CHECK [✓].

PART 1: SELECTION PRACTICES

1 To what extent are policies and practices concerning the selection of principals communicated throughout your school system?

(a) extensively ___ (b) selectively ___ (c) not at all ___

2. In your opinion, which of the following positions is characteristic of your school system?

(a) preference to select principals from within the school system ___
(b) preference to select principals from outside the school system ___
(c) preference to select the best candidate regardless of current employment ___

3. (a) In your opinion, which criteria are considered by your school system in the selection process? (Check [✓] all that are applicable.)

previous experience.................................. ___
education.. ___
match to school.. ___
match to community................................. ___
previous performance............................... ___
motivation... ___
statement of educational philosophy....... ___
job-related skills and knowledge.............. ___
personality.. ___
performance in previous selection interviews in your system....................... ___
Other (please specify)
________________________............ ___
________________________............ ___

(b) What do you consider are the three most important criteria which should be used in the selection of principals?
(1) ____
(2) ____
(3) ____

4. In your opinion, how should the following aspects rank in order of importance in providing data for evaluation of candidates? **(Use 1 for highest rank, 2 for second highest, etc.)**

___ letter of application and resume
___ experience
___ references (including reference checks)
___ written reports from current/past supervisors
___ performance in interviews
___ other (please specify) ________________________
___ ________________________________

5. To what extent were you informed about the specific reason(s) why you were selected for your current position?

(a) full disclosure .... ____
(b) some disclosure............ ____
(c) no disclosure................. ____

6. Does your school system have either of these programs?

(a) pre-selection candidate leadership training Yes ____ No ____
(b) new principal in-service training Yes ____ No ____

7. In your opinion, do either of the following affect the application of the policy for the selection of principals in your school system:

(a) characteristics of the school? Yes ____ No ____
(b) nature of the community? Yes ____ No ____

If "Yes", please provide a brief explanation.
(a) school ____
____
____
____

(b) community ____
____
____
____

8. (a) To what extent are you satisfied with the process currently used by your school system for the selection of principals?

very satisfied .... ____
satisfied....................... ____
dissatisfied.................... ____
very dissatisfied............ ____

(b) What aspects would you like to be changed in the process?

____
____
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____

9. Please provide any other information or opinions that you consider to be relevant to the topic of selection of principals.

PART 2: EVALUATION PRACTICES

10. To what extent are policies and practices concerning the evaluation of principals communicated throughout your school system?

(a) extensively ____ (b) selectively ____ (c) not at all ____

11. Which of the following alternatives best describes evaluation procedures in your school system?

(a) very different from what is described in policy................ ____
(b) approximately as described in policy............................ ____
(c) as described in policy.. ____
(d) not sure.. ____

12. Please rate the importance of these purposes of evaluation of principals. (Place one check [✓] in each row.)

Purpose	Importance in your school system			
	No 0	Slight 1	Moderate 2	High 3
Promote professional growth and improvement of principals				
Identify areas for professional development				
Identify appropriate criteria and standards for evaluation				
Clarify and communicate role expectations				
Assess the extent to which expectations are being met				
Improve student performance				
Provide public accountability				
Provide evidence for special recognition				
Provide information for promotion				
Provide evidence for termination of administrative designation				
Other (please specify) 1. 2.				

13. Does your school system involve principals in planning any of the following activities related to their performance evaluations?

		Yes	No
(a)	input into development of policy about the evaluation of principals..............................	___	___
(b)	selecting their own evaluator	___	___
(c)	establishing criteria for their own evaluation......	___	___
(d)	deciding on time lines for their own evaluation...	___	___
(e)	deciding who provides information for their own evaluation..	___	___
(f)	other (please specify)		
	________________________________.................	___	___
	________________________________.................	___	___

14. Does your system have written criteria for the evaluation of principals?

Yes ___ No ___

15. In your opinion, what are the three main criteria used in evaluating principals in your school system?

(a) ____
(b) ____
(c) ____

16. In your opinion, what are the three main criteria which should be used in evaluating principals in your school system?

(a) ____
(b) ____
(c) ____

17. What is the title of the individual responsible for preparing the formal evaluation report on principals in your school system?

____

18. Which of the following aspects are considered in your school system where principals are being formally evaluated? (Please check [✓] all that apply.)

staff surveys.......................... ____
student surveys...................... ____
parent surveys....................... ____
student achievement............. ____
financial management........... ____
school planning activity........ ____
self-evaluations..................... ____
religious faith......................... ____
recommendations from
previous evaluations........ ____
overall organization skills...... ____
other (please specify)
____________________............ ____
____________________............ ____

19. In your opinion, do either of the following affect the application of the policy for formal evaluation of principals in your school system:

(a) characteristics of the school? Yes ____ No ____
(b) nature of the community? Yes ____ No ____

If "Yes", please provide a brief explanation.
(a) school ____
____
____
____
(b) community ____
____
____
____

20. (a) To what extent are you satisfied with the process currently used for the evaluation of principals?

very satisfied ____
satisfied ____
dissatisfied ____
very dissatisfied ____

(b) What would you like to be changed in the process?
____
____
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____

21. **Please provide any other information or opinions that you consider to be relevant to the topic of evaluation of principals.**

PART 3: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

22. How many students are enrolled in your school? ________

23. For how long have you been a principal? (Count the year beginning September 1 as a full year.)

____years

24. For how long have you been in your present position? (Count the year beginning September 1 as a full year.)

____years

25. Which of the following alternatives describes your selection as principal in your current position?

(a) selected from within the school system _____
(b) selected from outside the school system _____

26. What was your position at the time of your selection for your current position?

(a) principal ___
(b) vice-principal ___
(c) department head ___
(d) teacher ___
(e) other (please specify) ___
____

27. How frequently have you been formally evaluated in your present position? (A formal evaluation is one which leads to a written report that you see.)

____times

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

Superintendents Interview Schedule

Selection of principals.

1. Under what circumstances would a decision be made to hire from outside your school system rather than appoint from within?

2. Please describe the procedures typically followed in your school system when a principalship becomes vacant.

3. What information is typically made available to potential candidates in the vacancy announcement? Does the announcement identify the specific school in which the vacancy exists, or is the announcement more generic in nature (to allow for internal transfers)?

4. Several systems have indicated some dissatisfaction with either the size or quality of the talent pool.
    (a) In your opinion, what factors are contributing to this situation?
    (b) Do you believe that pre-service training programs (e.g. courses, workshops, internships)would help address this problem?
    (c) If "Yes," who should have the responsibility of planning and providing this training?
    (d) What skills and/or knowledge should form the core of this training program?
    (e) What other actions would help to rectify the situation?

5. Most superintendents ranked "references" as more important than "written reports from current and past supervisors" for collecting data for the selection decision. Could you comment on why "references" were considered more important?

Evaluation of principals.

6. Do you believe there is a connection between evaluation and principal effectiveness? Please explain. What additional elements may be necessary to effect a better connection?

7. Which focus best describes the approach taken by your system in the evaluation of principals?
   (a) results based -- heavy emphasis on outcomes, goal achievement, student results, balanced budgets
   (b) fulfilment of role description -- the evaluation focuses on the degree to which the principal has addressed the tasks outlined in the principal's role description

   (c) evidence of "best practice" -- the evaluation focuses on performance which contributes to effective schools (as identified in "effective schools" literature)

8. (a) Which of the following methods do you use for collecting data for the purposes of principal evaluation? What others would you add?
   -- interviews/discussions with the principal
   --central office personnel feedback
   --direct observation by the Superintendent
   -- general community feedback
   --parent feedback
   --staff feedback
   --student feedback
   --reports
   --portfolios
   --opinions of school board members
   --test scores

   (b) Which of the above would you consider to be the most reliable? least reliable?

9. Does your school system have written criteria for the evaluation of principals?

10. Which of the following do you consider to be the most important indicators of acceptable principal performance? What others might you add?
    - --general quality of instruction
    - --teacher performance & morale
    - --atmosphere of the school
    - --organizational skills
    - --educational leadership
    - --clear education plan
    - --good communications with staff
    - --good judgment
    - --good school discipline
    - --supports professional development for staff
    - --participative management
    - --balances the budget
    - --wide range of educational programs
    - --human relations (interpersonal) skills
    - --student performance and progress: test scores
    - --public reaction
    - --student behavior
    - --adherence to system rules and procedures
    - --personal professional growth
    - --high expectations of staff and students
    - --not "making waves"
    - --others

11. (a) To what extent are expectations (responsibility areas and the relative importance of each) regarding principal performance articulated and reinforced with school principals?
    (1) clearly articulated and communicated
    (2) generally outlined in a role description
    (3) generally understood by both parties (CEO and principal)
    (b) To what extent are levels of competence expected in various responsibility areas articulated and reinforced with school principals?
    (1) clearly articulated and communicated
    (2) generally outlined in a role description
    (3) generally understood by both parties (CEO and principal)

    OR should they be detailed?

12. To what extent are the roles of all individuals involved in the evaluation process (those collecting/providing data) defined in policy?

13. What role do self-evaluations play in the evaluation process in your system? (e.g., they are intended as a professional development exercise, or they form the base of the evaluation report)

14. How frequently are you able to observe the principal in action at the school? (How many visits would you typically make to a school in a month during the school year?)

15. In your opinion, do the practices used in the evaluation of principals comply with the written policies? Please explain.

Principal's Interview Schedule

Selection of principals.

1. What information is typically made available to potential candidates in the vacancy announcement? Does the announcement identify the specific school in which the vacancy exists, or is the announcement more generic in nature (to allow for internal transfers)?

2. Several systems have indicated some dissatisfaction with either the size and/or quality of the talent pool.
    (a) In your opinion, what factors are contributing to this situation?
    (b) Do you believe that pre-service training programs (e.g. courses workshops, internships) would help address this problem?
    (c) If "Yes," who should have the responsibility of planning and providing this training?
    (d) What skills and/or knowledge should form the core of this training program?
    (e) What other actions would help to rectify the situation?

Evaluation of principals.

3. Do you believe there is a connection between evaluation and principal effectiveness? Please explain. What additional elements may be necessary to effect a better connection?

4 Which focus best describes the approach taken by your system in the evaluation of principals?
   (a) results based -- heavy emphasis on outcomes, goal achievement, student results, balanced budgets
   (b) fulfilment of role description -- the evaluation focuses on the degree to which the principal has addressed the tasks outlined in the principal's role description
   (c) evidence of "best practice" -- the evaluation focuses on performance which contributes to effective schools (as identified in "effective schools" literature)

5. (a) Which of the following methods are used in your system for collecting data for the purposes of principal evaluation? What others would you add?
   -- interviews/discussions with the principal
   --central office personnel feedback
   --direct observation by the Superintendent
   -- general community feedback
   --parent feedback (or surveys)
   --staff feedback (or surveys)
   --student feedback (or surveys)
   --reports
   --portfolios
   --opinions of school board members
   --test scores

   (b) Which of the above would you consider to be the most reliable? least reliable?

6. (a) To what extent are expectations (responsibility areas and the relative importance of each) regarding principal performance articulated and reinforced with school principals?
   (1) clearly articulated and communicated
   (2) generally outlined in a role description
   (3) generally understood by both parties (CEO and principal)

(b) To what extent are levels of competence expected in various responsibility areas articulated and reinforced with school principals?
  (1) clearly articulated and communicated
  (2) generally outlined in a role description
  (3) generally understood by both parties (CEO and principal)

OR should they be detailed?

7. To what extent are the roles of all individuals (e.g. collecting/providing information, writing reports) involved in the evaluation process defined in policy?

8. What role do self-evaluations play in the evaluation process in your system? (e.g., they are intended as a professional development exercise, or they form the base of the evaluation report)

9. How frequently have you been observed "in action" (on site) at the school by supervisory personnel? (How many visits would supervisory personnel typically make to the school in a month during the school year?)

10. Does your school system offer a remediation program for principals who may need support? If, yes, please describe the process used?

Appendix B

Correspondence

26 July 1996

Dear Superintendent:

As you are aware, recent changes in the structure of education (e.g., fewer and larger jurisdictions, school-based management, and school councils) have significantly altered the role of the school principal. For some time, the literature has emphasized the critical role the principal plays in effective schools. Therefore, it is important to make sure that effective individuals are selected to and maintained in these positions of responsibility.

Consequently, I will be conducting research on the policies and practices used in the selection and evaluation of school principals in Alberta. Dr. Ken Ward and David Thomas, a doctoral student and formerly Superintendent of Schools with the East Smoky School Division, will be co-researchers. The research proposal has been approved by an Ethics Committee of the Department of Educational Policy Studies. Funding has been provided by the Scholarship and Research Awards Committee of the Faculty of Education, University of Alberta.

The research will include these activities: (a) review of documentation relating to existing policies and practices for selection and evaluation of principals; (b) questionnaires for all superintendents and a sample of principals; and (c) interviews with 10 superintendents and 10 principals.

At this time, we would like to invite your participation in this important project by providing copies of current policies regarding the selection and evaluation of principals in your jurisdiction. In the absence of written policy--or where current practice differs from written policy--would you please provide a written description of the current practice in each area.

The sample of principals to whom questionnaires will be sent will be drawn from those who were first appointed as principals in their system in 1992, 1993, or 1994. Would you please also provide a list of your principals who meet this criterion?

We hope that you will agree to cooperate in this study. A summary report will be sent to all participating superintendents.

Yours sincerely,

E. A. Holdaway, PhD
Professor

6 August 1996

Dear Superintendent:

Thank you very much for your letter of July 31 and for providing the information that I requested concerning policies and practices of your system regarding selection and evaluation of school principals. Thank you also for providing the names of the principals meeting our criteria.

This information will be very valuable in our province-wide study.

Yours sincerely,

E. A. Holdaway, Ph.D.
Professor

13 September 1996

Dear Superintendent:

On 26 July 1996 I requested that you send me copies of your policies and procedures concerning the selection and evaluation of school principals. A copy of my letter is attached.

Many replies have been obtained from superintendents, but to date information from you system has not been received. I realize that this is a busy time, but I would be very grateful if you could reply soon. I hope to obtain information from all superintendents in Alberta so that the report on this important topic can fully reflect the situation throughout the province.

If your reply has already been mailed, please accept my thanks for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

E. A. Holdaway, Ph.D.
Professor

27 November 1996

Dear Superintendent:

In a letter dated July 26 I advised you that I am directing a research project on the policies and practices used in the selection and evaluation of school principals in Alberta. The study is being conducted in three phases: (a) document analysis of all available written policies and practices; (b) a questionnaire to all superintendents and a sample of 100 principals; and (c) an interview with 10 superintendents and 10 principals.

The response to the request for policies has been very pleasing, as we have received replies from all 67 school systems in the province. An initial analysis of the policies has been completed: 25 systems have policies concerning both the selection and evaluation of principals; 16 have policies relating to evaluation only; 7 have policies on selection only; and 18 are in the process of revising or developing policies in one or both of these areas. One system declined to participate. We are gratified that this study has the potential to assist school systems with further development of relevant policies.

We are now ready to begin the second phase. Enclosed is a questionnaire relating to some specific aspects of policies and practices concerning selection and evaluation of principals. The questionnaires are identified by system to allow us to match responses with the documentation already received. However, in the report no system will be identified by name and any cited comments will be anonymous. The study has been approved by an Ethics Committee of the Department of Educational Policy Studies.

We would appreciate receiving you completed questionnaire by December 20. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me (office: phone 492-3690; fax 492-2024) or Dave Thomas (home: 476-4559) in the evening.

We look forward to your continuing cooperation in this study. A copy of our report will be sent to all superintendents.

Yours sincerely,

E. A. Holdaway, Ph.D.
Professor

9 January 1997

Dear Superintendent:

On 27 November 1996 I requested that you complete a questionnaire addressing specific aspects of policies and procedures concerning the selection and evaluation of school principals. A copy of my letter is attached.

To date, 80 % of the superintendent questionnaires have been completed, but a response from your system has not yet been received. I realize that this is a busy time, but I would be very grateful if you could reply soon. I hope to obtain information from all superintendents in Alberta so that the report on this important topic can fully reflect their opinions.

If your completed questionnaire has already been mailed, please accept my thanks for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

E. A. Holdaway, Ph.D.
Professor

12 December 1996

Dear Principal:

As you are aware, recent changes in the structure of education--such as fewer and larger jurisdictions, school-based management, and school councils--have significantly altered the role of the school principal. The literature emphasizes the critical role principals play in effective schools. Therefore, it is important to ensure that effective principals are selected to and maintained in these positions of responsibility.

Consequently, I am conducting research on the policies and practices used in the selection and evaluation of school principals in Alberta. Dr. Ken Ward and David Thomas, a doctoral student and formerly Superintendent of Schools with the East Smoky School Division, are co-researchers. The research project has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the Department of Educational Policy Studies. Funding has been provided by the Scholarship and Research Awards Committee of the Faculty of Education.

The research includes these activities: (a) a review of documents relating to existing policies and practices for selection and evaluation of principals; (b) a survey for superintendents and a sample of principals; and (c) interviews with 10 superintendents and 10 principals. The principals identified for involvement in this study have two to four years experience as principals in their current school systems. Your superintendent has identified you as a prospective participant in this study.

We invite your participation in this project by completing the enclosed survey. The information you provide will be important to our understanding of current practices.

Would you please return your completed survey in the enclosed stamped addressed envelope by January 15. If you have any questions, please call me during the day (492-3690) or Dave Thomas in the evening (476-4559).

We hope that you will participate in this study. A summary report will be sent to all participating principals.

Yours sincerely,

E. A. Hollywood, Ph.D.
Professor

17 January 1997

Dear Principal:

On 12 December, 1996 I requested that you complete a questionnaire addressing specific aspects of policies and procedures concerning the selection and evaluation of school principals. A copy of my letter is attached.

To date, 44 % of the principal questionnaires have been completed, but your response has not yet been received. I realize that this is a busy time, but I would be very grateful if you could reply soon. I hope to obtain information from all principals included in the study so that the report on this important topic can fully reflect their opinions.

If your completed questionnaire has already been mailed, please accept my thanks for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

E. A. Holdaway, Ph.D.
Professor

10 September 1996

Dear ________________:

I wish to inform you that we are conducting a study on the policies and practices used by Alberta school systems in the selection and evaluation of school principals. This study is described in the attached letter which was sent to all superintendents in July 1996.

Any comments or information that you wish to provide about this study will be gratefully received. A copy of the final report will be forwarded to you in late 1997.

Yours sincerely,

E. A. Holdaway, Ph.D.
Professor

(Letter sent to Alberta Education, Alberta Teachers' Association, Alberta School Boards' Association, and the College of Alberta School Superintendents.)

Memo

To: Superintendent/Principal

From: David Thomas, PhD Candidate
University of Alberta

Date: April 20, 1997

Thank you for agreeing to participate in Phase Three of our study of practices and policies relating to the selection and evaluation of principals used in school systems in Alberta. Only selected issues identified from the document analysis or the surveys will be discussed.

I look forward to the opportunity of discussing aspects of this important topic with you on Wednesday, April 23, 1997 at 11:00 a.m.. The interview will take about 1.5 hr. Enclosed is a copy of the questions which will guide our discussion.

If your plans change and there is a need to reschedule this interview, please call me at 476-4559.